

HEMINGWAY'S VENETIAN MUSE ADRIANA IVANCICH

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIOGRAPHY OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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Foreword

In summer 1961 I was on my first holiday in Italy, when I was hit by the news that Ernest Hemingway had shot himself. Shortly after I saw a story in an Italian magazine titled “Hemingway e le donne” (Hemingway and the Women). There were pictures of his four official wives and also photos of a young Venetian girl, called Adriana Ivancich. It was written, that Hemingway had fallen madly in love with her, while on a holiday in northern Italy.

I spent my own beach holiday at a newly developed resort on a sandy peninsula at the mouth of the Tagliamento river called Lignano Sabbiadoro. Only later I understood that I had stayed only some miles south of the place, where Hemingway and Adriana first met.

I always had been fascinated by the fairy tale town of Venice and when I read Hemingway’s novel “Across the River and into the Trees” I liked the atmosphere he evoked in the city and the surrounding lagoon during winter time. The love story I considered rather pathetic and unconvincing.

While I was living in Italy the name Ivancich appeared here and there. A friend who knew Adriana in her youth, when both stayed on holiday on Capri, told me of her suicide in 1983.¹ Two years later I read Bernice Kert’s book “The Hemingway Women”, with a long chapter on Adriana.

In 2009 I published my own book “Hemingway und die Deutschen” (Hemingway and the Germans), inspired by the German communists the writer-reporter got to know during the Spanish Civil War and including all aspects of his relationship with Germans and Germany. I remained more interested in Hemingway’s life and his personality than in his books.

With the present essay, published exactly 50 years after the writer’s death, I tried to collect the available material on Hemingway and Adriana Ivancich and give a picture of the complicated relationship that lasted for more than five years, renewed his creative power, that had faded in the 1940’s, and inspired not only “Across the River and into the Trees” but also “The Old

¹ Adriana’s aunt owned the villa “L’Ulivo” on Capri. About Adrianas stay on Capri: Adriana Ivanich, La Torre Bianca, Milano 1980, pp. 195.

Man and the Sea". It is also the story of Hemingway and his relationship with the town of Venice.

I am indebted to Hemingway's most important American biographers that all have given space to the figure of Adriana Ivancich, most of all Bernice Kert, further to Ann Doyle who worked herself through Hemingway's letters addressed to Adriana. There remains the difficulty that for copyright reasons the Hemingway Foundation even fifty years after the death of the writer prohibits direct quotations from the unpublished letters.²

² In the Hemingway Letters Project all 6000 letters Hemingway wrote in his lifetime will be published in 12 volumes in the next years.

Returning to Italy

Summer 1948. Hemingway was nearly 50 years old. He was living in his Finca in Cuba at the outskirts of Havana. For two and a half years he had been married to the former war correspondent Mary Welsh, who had just turned 40. Since 1940 the writer had not published anything serious. He had put on ice projects that were published only posthumously.

He had followed the Second World War not only as a correspondent. His intention had been to collect material for a new book.³ But the book would not come forward. He had witnessed such terrible battles that he was somewhat traumatized and could bring nothing to paper. Since 1945 he had not been in Europe, the continent that inspired his greatest novels "A Farewell to Arms" and "For Whom the Bell Tolls".

Summer 1948: He felt the desire to return to his first encounters with Italy, visit the places, where he had worked as a young ambulance driver thirty years before during the battles of the First World War. Since that time the Veneto region had occupied a special place in his mind. "I sort of grew up there as a kid. I couldn't go there while Mussolini was around, but I went back soon after he wasn't. I like the place,"⁴ he explained to a newspaper reporter.

³ For the magazine "Collier's" he had written only five pieces between summer 1944 and the beginning of 1945. Letter to Alfred Rice, 15 December 1948. Hemingway. Selected Letters 1917-1961, New York 1981, pp. 654.

⁴ B.F. Meyer: Hemingway Novel of Venice Completed at Home in Cuba: in: Kansas City Star, Sept. 10th 1950.

Arriving in Venice

The Polish ship “Jagiello” left Havana on September 7th 1948 for Genoa. For Mary it was her first trip to Italy. First they went up to the mountain resort of Cortina d’Ampezzo, where they planned to stay for winter sports. On October 18th Mary was under the spell of Venice and noted in her diary: “We are in the Palace of the Compte [sic] Gritti (1496) with an ebullient Venetian glass chandelier, a huge inconvenient room just opposite the Church of Santa Maria della Salute on the Grand Canal.”⁵

And the next day: “Venice is more beautiful , and more mixed up, than I could have imagined. ... The bells, beginning at daylight and continuing intermittently until well after dark seem more mellow and less clangy than in other towns. Water softens bells?”⁶ Ernest, who had not visited Venice before, was less poetic. He found the town “absolutely god-damned wonderful”.⁷ To his Italian translator Fernanda Pivano he confides in a letter dated October 27th that he is finally feeling at home at the “Gritti”, where “Mr. Byron, Mr. Browning (the poet, not the gun manufacturer) and Mr. D’Annunzio (Gabriele) the poet, playwright, novelist shit and here all wrote. This makes Mr. Papa feel as if he had finally arrived at his proper estate.”⁸

⁵ Mary Welsh Hemingway: *How it was*, London, 1976, p. 224.

⁶ Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How it was*, p. 224.

⁷ Quote Bernice Kert, *The Hemingway Women*, New York/London 1983, p. 434.

⁸ Hemingway’s Veneto, Catalogue of Exhibition, Venice 2011, p. 43.



Ernest and Mary in front of Gritti Palace Hotel 1948 (J. F. Kennedy Library Boston)



Hemingway's suite was just over the Bar at the corner of the first floor



With Fernanda Pivano and Ettore Sottsass in front of the Gritti (J. F. Kennedy Library)

In Torcello

For most of November, Hemingway stayed in the simple Locanda, which Giuseppe Cipriani had bought in 1935 on the then nearly deserted island of Torcello. Mary: "On All Souls' Day we splashed across the lagoon, past Murano, the glass blowing island, Burano, the lace island, to lunch at Torcello, where we loved the inn – Cipriani of Harry's Bar was the owner – and Papa decided immediately after looking at the rooms, a little sitting room with a fireplace and French doors overlooking the garden and cathedral and a big enough bedroom with two big beds and a yellow bathroom, to move there."⁹



Hemingway and the Ciprianis on the left side (J. F. Kennedy Library Boston)

⁹ Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How it was*, p. 225.



Locanda Cipriani on the Torcello Island



From the two windows on the upper floor Hemingway had a view on the ancient churches

Two days later they took all their luggage and made themselves comfortable for a longer stay. In the evenings Ernest and Mary sat in front of the fireplace with the burning beech logs, while it was cold and foggy outside.

To write he retired to a room on the upper floor with some bottles of Amarone wine. He was writing a story entitled "The Great Blue River" for "Holiday" Magazine. But he had in mind a book on Venice and the War.

On November 17th Mary left for Florence to see her old friends Alan and Lucy Moorehead¹⁰ and the art historian Bernard Berenson (1865-1959) in Fiesole. She took the light blue Buick they had shipped from Cuba to Italy, and was driven down south by the chauffeur Richard. Ernest remained alone.

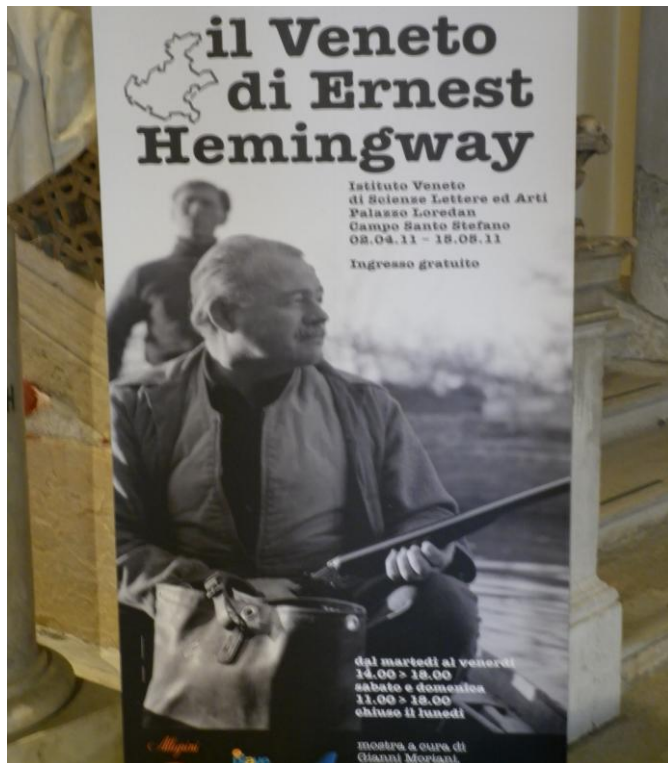
From Torcello he wrote to his wife. He said he was working hard. There was beautiful fall weather. "There is nobody living here now. ... Felt pretty damn lost and lonely when you left but got to work cleaning up the letters ... Today it is sharp, cold and beautiful, the haze burning off the lagoon."¹¹

The day before, three couples had come for lunch. He himself had his meal (clams, sole, white rice) outside in the sun. He was in the company of two dogs, Mooky and Bobby. If possible he was going hunting ducks with a local called Emilio, who took him in his boat through the lagoon. If there were no ducks around, he was also shooting smaller birds. His shoulder was already sore "from those high, straight up and down shots".¹² Sometimes he talked to the priest, Padre Francesco of the nearby ancient basilica Santa Maria Assunta.

¹⁰ Alan Moorehead (1910-1983) had been war correspondent like Mary.

¹¹ Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How it was*, p. 229 (November 20th 1948).

¹² Hemingway, *Selected Letters*, pp. 653.



Hemingway hunting on Torcello (Poster from Hemingway Exhibition in Venice)

In Cortina Hemingway had befriended Federico Kechler. The Venetian nobleman, who had been in the Italian navy, spoke fluent English. In Venice, Kechler presented him to other members of the High Society - his brother Carlo, Baron Nanyuki Franchetti, Count Carlo Di Robilant, and the Greek princess Aspasia, mother in law of King Peter of Yugoslavia. All were keen on the company of the famous American writer, who enjoyed considerable success in Italy, when publication of his books resumed after being forbidden during Fascism.

At the beginning of December the Hemingways were invited to a duck shooting party on the Franchetti-estate near the Tagliamento river some 30 miles east of Venice. Mary remembered: "One of his [Franchetti's] men poled us in a skiff to our blind, a big barrel sunk far out in the lagoon, and we waited there for the sound of a horn signaling that shooting would begin, smelling the marsh, watching the sky change from orange-pink to silver and the reedy shores emerge from mauve to yellow and green and rust and later the mountains appear smoky blue in the north. We never heard the horn, but when ducks began coming over us in pairs, families and

clouds, some so high that they were fly-sized, we began shooting, Ernest knocking down eighteen with a new gun he had bought.”¹³

December 11th became a special day in the life of the American writer. He met a girl, that became his muse for five years. Ernest went duck shooting for a second time, now without Mary.¹⁴ When he saw 18 year old Adriana Ivancich he got immediately infatuated. “It struck me like lightning,” Hemingway confessed.¹⁵

Meeting Adriana

Adriana waited in the rain for the arrival of the hunting party in Latisana at the crossing of four roads. Nearby the family owned a farm in San Michele, on the left bank of the Tagliamento. The big mansion, built by the Venetian architect Baldassare Longhena¹⁶, was bombed during the war by American aircraft. Only the barn, used for drying tobacco leaves and a little chapel survived. In the years shortly after the war, the family lived in the barn. The noble family originally from Dalmatia, with ship- and landowners and diplomats in its ranks, had lost most of its assets.

Carlo Kechler (1900-1965), who was driving Hemingway’s Buick, was late. Adriana entered the car and Carlo presented the other passengers: “Well, this is Hemingway, about whom all Venice is talking.” She saw in the first place an old man: “The front cut in two by two deep wrinkles, straight moustache, the lips on one side have a fold, careless, the eyes look vivid and penetrating, perhaps he is not really old, he has a friendly look.”¹⁷

¹³ Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How it was*, p. 225.

¹⁴ Nanyuki was the son of Baron Raimondo Franchetti and Sara Louise de Rothschild. The old Franchetti had spent part of his life in Africa; that explained the exotic names he gave to his children (Nanyuki, Afdera, Simba). He had died in a plane crash in 1935. Afdera in 1957 became the fourth wife of actor Henry Fonda.

¹⁵ Letter Hemingway to Adriana Feb. 15th 1954. Quote Jeffrey Meyers, *Hemingway*, London 1985, p. 440, quote Kert, *Hemingway*, p. 477.

¹⁶ He also built the church Santa Maria della Salute on the Canale Grande.

¹⁷ Adriana Ivancich, *La Torre Bianca*, Milano 1980, pp. 9.



Ruined Building of Ivancich Estate built by Baldassare Longhena





Franchetti Estate in the Lagoon

Adriana excused herself, saying that she had not read anything by the writer. And Hemingway replied: “You would not have learnt nothing good.” She took part in the duck hunt, although she had no experience with guns and shooting. She missed all her targets and finished with a bruise on her face.¹⁸

They stayed out for hours, each in a barrel anchored in the water. Only the heads looked out. It was freezing cold, the water slightly frozen. Afterwards the game was laid out and the hunters warmed themselves on the open fire. Adriana was the only woman present. Her hair was wet and she tried to dry it near the fire. She asked for a comb and only Hemingway had one. He broke it in two and gave one part to her. “Here is the half of mine.”¹⁹

Adriana was flattered by the attention of the famous writer, and for the next day was invited to a meeting at Harry’s Bar, a few steps from the Gritti Hotel.

¹⁸ Hilary Hemingway, *Hemingway in Cuba*, New York 2005, p. 95.

¹⁹ Hemingway had a hair fetishism that appears in several of his writings. See Meyers, *Hemingway*, pp. 434.

In Cortina

Later in December Ernest and Mary were back in Cortina. She had found a house to stay in, the Villa Aprile, at the edge of the town. In the neighborhood there was the villa of the Kechler family, whom they befriended. The Kechlers were originally coming from the German Black Forest. Later as rich textile producers and traders they settled in the surroundings of Udine.

At Christmas Mary decorated a Christmas tree with real candles and a crèche. Fernanda Pivano (1917-2009) stayed with them as a guest. She was Hemingway's official translator for the Italian language, just married to designer Ettore Sottsass. Hemingway was impressed by the fact that Fernanda had been arrested by the SS in 1944 when the Germans, during a search in the offices of publisher Einaudi in Turin had found a contract stipulating that Pivano should translate the then forbidden "A Farewell to Arms".²⁰ To meet Hemingway and develop a lifelong friendship with the writer was for Pivano perhaps the biggest thrill in her entire life, as she confessed.²¹

On January 20th Mary broke her ankle while skiing. In March Ernest suffered another mishap when he caught a severe eye and facial infection called erysipelas, and he had to be treated at a clinic in Padova with high doses of penicillin. He was in danger of losing his eyesight. The infection spread over part of his face covering it with crusts. Both remained in the mountains until the end of March. Such long skiing holidays were not uncommon for Hemingway. In the 1920s, he and his then wife Hadley went skiing in the Austrian alps and stayed favored by the good dollar exchange rate sometimes several months long.

It was not clear from the beginning that Hemingway would write a whole novel inspired by his stay at the lagoon. Mary notes: "During the winter in Cortina Ernest had started to write a story about duck shooting in the Veneto. When I had read the first few pages I said, 'Please don't let it be just ducks and marshes. Please put in Venice too.'"²² Actually he put some more

²⁰ Fernanda Pivano: *Persona and personalità di Hemingway*, in: *Hemingway in Venezia* ed. Sergio Perosa, p. 163.

²¹ Hemingway's Veneto, p. 22.,

²² Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 239.

into what would become “Across the River and into the Trees”: War, Death, and naturally Love, his love for Adriana Ivancich.

At first it seemed unclear to Mary, that the book was a declaration of love to his Venetian muse. Hemingway’s self-confidence returned and he became convinced that he was working on something important. “This book will be too hot to touch,” he wrote to his publisher Scribner. And he added: “Creativity really takes power, when you are in love.”²³

From Cortina, Hemingway and Mary made a pilgrimage to Fossalta di Piave, the place where Ernest had been severely wounded by an Austrian grenade in July 1918 and had nearly died. In 1923 he had already taken Hadley to this spot, so important to him.



Hemingway 1918 after being wounded (J.F. Kennedy Library)

²³ Victor Schuller, *Hemingway und die Frauen*, Hamburg 1988, p. 209.

Back in Venice March/April 1949

Late March Ernest and Mary moved again to their old room at the "Gritti". When he presented himself to Adriana, his face was still crusty and he might not have offered a nice appearance for the girl, who had just turned 19. After the absence of three months he professed: "I terribly missed you, Daughter!"

For some time he had called himself "Papa" and younger women "Daughter". But with Adriana it was different, she was the youngest in all the other relationships, he had with women. His first love, the nurse Agnes von Kurowski, was seven years older than him.

Adriana could have been his daughter. She had lost her father only three years before, when she was fifteen. Carlo Ivancich was murdered in 1945 after the Liberation. One night he was dragged from his bed and his body was found three days later near the river. Who the murderers were, was not clear. Were they from the political left or the right or only common criminals? It all looked like a vendetta.

Adriana in her account remained vague: "He was killed by extremist elements who did not want to be known that parts of food and money offered to the partisans hidden in the mountains had been misused for personal gains. But they also wanted to take over power and therefore they terrorized and neutralized the population, eliminating troublesome persons."²⁴

Now they were seeing each other regularly. In the meantime Hemingway phoned Adriana. One day he asked her for a photo that he could put next to the telephone. She was hesitant to give him a photo, because she was not satisfied with her looks: "The eyes too narrow, the nose too long, the skin too olive colored and the mouth – when she did not laugh – with a bitter line."²⁵

²⁴ Ivancich, Torre, p. 140.

²⁵ Ivancich, Torre, p. 26.

Mamma Dora wanted to know whom her daughter was meeting so assiduously and invited the American to her Palazzo in the Calle di Rimedio, at the corner of Rio Santa Maria Formosa and the Ponte Pasqualigo.²⁶

It was an important Palazzo. Proudly it was told that the composers Wagner and Liszt had played the piano in the salon. Hemingway presented himself well dressed with a tie.

Adriana's aunt Emma was also present. Together with her friend, the pianist Renata Borgatti (1894-1964), she had already met Hemingway by chance in 1923 in Cortina. Now they remembered the time when Hemingway sat at the same table in the hotel restaurant. He was always late for his meals because he was writing in his room. "Hemingway amusedly talked of the old Cortina, a village for a few appassionati and with excellent snow. He and Renata, a splendid girl, with the ski and the seal skin went up to the Giau pass, and then the dangerous descent on the fresh snow, that was so high, that they finished on the roofs of the toulà, the hay barns. And in our salon he could admire a carbon portrait of Renata made by Sargent²⁷", writes Gianfranco Ivancich, Adriana's brother, in a memoir.²⁸

On another day in a Café Hemingway ordered Bloody Marys for both of them. Then they spoke about his writing, that was slowly advancing. It was she, who made him write again, he said. „The vein had dried out, around me there was only emptiness.“²⁹ She also believed that she had broken his writer's block, and she was happy about her success. "I had been so full of life and enthusiasm, that I transferred these to him," she wrote later. And in the Italian magazine "Epoca" Adriana wrote : "Hemingway told me that he fell ill while writing 'Across the River and into the Trees' and that he had to lay the book aside, because he could not write any longer, but then he had got to know me and had felt how a new energy flowed over from me into him." Hemingway confirmed again later "You have given back to me the ability to write, and for that I always will be grateful to you. I was able to finish my book and have given a face to the heroine."

²⁶ The address was San Marco No. 4421. The houses in Venice are not named after the street but after the Sestriere, the area of the town.

²⁷ John Singer Sargent (1856-1925). The American was the most important portrait painter of his time.

²⁸ Gianfranco Ivancich: *Ricordo personale di Hemingway*, in: Sergio Perosa ed. : *Hemingway a Venezia*, Florence 1988, p. 219.

²⁹ Ivancich, Torre, p. 38.

“I did not ask too many questions: I knew that the effort of the writer remains a secret until the fruit is ripe”, she thought: Wasn’t she a writer too? She had started to write poems at 14, then stories and even a novel. But that novel had been lost during the War, she said. Hemingway said, he had also lost a novel.

He asked her whether in his new novel he could give his main female character her looks. She said: “In the book there are also Nanuck, Carlo Robilant, Cipriani: why should only I say no?”³⁰

He said, he would finish “Across the River” and would write another much better book for her.³¹ Was he already thinking of “The Old Man and the Sea”?

They spoke about Venice and her problems. Both agreed that the town should have a Doge again. Hemingway continued with his adulations: If he could choose, he would make her Dogressa. And how to finance the survival of the town? Adriana had the idea that the tourists should pay an entrance fee corresponding to the days they stayed.³²

Adriana, who for some time had been making little drawings, started to produce some proposals for the cover of Hemingway’s new novel. When he saw the drawings – dark shadows of leafless mulberry trees on the edge of the lagoon or an artistic ensemble of the sights of Venice – he asked her: “Do you want to become my partner?” - “What does it mean: partner?” - “Working, doing, sharing the things for the best and the worst. And with you I will try always to share the best, that I promise you.”³³

³⁰ Ivancich, Torre, p. 92.

³¹ Ivancich, Torre, p. 38.

³² Ivancich, Torre, p. 47. Indeed that was an idea that many years later was discussed to control the flooding of the town with tourists.

³³ Ivancich, Torre, p. 49.

Harry's Bar

Several of the meetings between Hemingway and Adriana took place in "Harry's Bar", just a few steps from the "Gritti". Founded in 1931 by Giuseppe Cipriani, a former waiter, the place became very popular with foreigners. While in Venice, Hemingway became Giuseppe's best guest: "He was very generous and filled more pages of his cheque book than those of a medium length novel," remembered the owner. His alcohol consumption was enormous. For the American the bar became his second home in Venice. It was like a little theatre for him. Hemingway had a narrow itinerary in Venice. He showed little interest in all the art treasures Venice had to offer.³⁴ Gianfranco said, he once accompanied Hemingway to the Scuola di San Rocco, where the writer admired Tintoretto's Crucifixion. He spoke of the mystical atmosphere around the realistically painted bodies.³⁵ But such expeditions in churches and museums were rare. He preferred the Bars at "Harry's" or in the "Gritti".³⁶ There it seemed he wanted to overcome his obsession with death.

Cipriani's Harry's Bar



³⁴ He was not the museum type. He wrote to Mary Hemingway, while she was in Florence: "I'll bet even you got tired in the Uffizi. That was the gallery that used to really knock me out." (November 20th 1948, Selected Letters, p. 653).

³⁵ Giancarlo Ivancich, *Ricordo*, p. 221.

³⁶ There is a tape recording of a story Hemingway invented and presented in Harry's Bar. See Google: "In Harry's Bar in Venice".



The Bar at the Hotel Gritti

Returning to Cuba 1949

On April 27th – after more than half a year around Venice and Cortina - Ernest and Mary finally left Italy again on the ship “Jagiello”. On May 24th they were back on the Finca in Cuba. Ernest was anxious to finish the novel. Mary had prepared the White Tower for his writing. “From all four sides the room’s deep windows gave views of the hills and Havana and the sea. It would be a quiet refuge from our inevitable household noises.”³⁷ But Hemingway preferred the house and left the tower for his cats. He worked under pressure, nearly forgetting his 50th birthday. “It was as if he were twenty-five, not fifty, but knowing at twenty-five what he now knew at fifty,” writes Michael Reynolds.³⁸

In Summer 1949 Mary was reading parts of the manuscript. She did not know what to think: “I was unhappy about the middle and later parts of the manuscript. ...But I had not figured out why and mentioned it to no one, not even my notebook. It made me feel disloyal, but I was finding Colonel Cantwell’s and his girl’s conversation banal beyond reason and their

³⁷ Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How it was*, p. 239.

³⁸ Michael Reynolds, *Hemingway. The Final Years*, New York/London 1999, p. 203.

obsession with food and the ploy of the emeralds a mysterious lapse of judgment. I kept my mouth shut.”³⁹ On the same page in her autobiography she mentioned Adriana for the first time, saying that Ernest was flirting with her, but she seemed not preoccupied that the book’s main female character, Renata, was such an open disguise for Adriana.

At the same time Hemingway refused to disclose details about his new book to the “New York Times Book Review”. He said : “The only important things are that I should keep healthy and write as well as I can. This is my program for 1949 and as long after as possible. A long time ago I found it was bad to discuss work you are engaged on.”⁴⁰

In the weeks and months after his return he started an intense correspondence with Adriana. Some letters he would sign with A. Ivancich, suggesting that they were so close in mind that they should exchange identities.⁴¹

After a few months Nanyuki Franchetti came to visit and brought news from Venice. The friends shot together at pigeons at Havana’s Club de Cazadores.

While still dreaming of his Venetian girl, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, made a visit together with his young girlfriend Dolores V. , an actress from New York.⁴² Ernest might have thought in his usual rough language: If this ugly French frog got such a young mistress, why can’t I? In summer 1949 ex-wife Pauline Pfeiffer travelled with the boys Patrick and Gregory to Venice. There they met Hemingway’s new friends, the Franchettis, the Kechlers and Adriana.

³⁹ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 246.

⁴⁰ NT Book Review July 31st 1949.

⁴¹ Hemingway loved to play with the change of identities. In “Across the River” he let’s Renata say: “Please love me. I wish it was me who could love you.” (p. 136).

⁴² Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 244; Annie Cohen Solal: Sartre. A Life, London 1991, p. 323.

Second Visit to Venice 1950

In Autumn 1949 the novel “Across the River and into the Trees” was roughly finished, and Hemingway started to test the reaction of his friends on the book. One of the first was Gianfranco Ivancich. Adriana’s brother had just arrived in Cuba and Hemingway was about to leave for Europe. Time pressed, but Hemingway wanted to read the manuscript to him. He asked Gianfranco to correct Italian names and make some other suggestions. He looked for a name for an old noble woman, and Gianfranco suggested “Dandolo”, because the real family, that gave a Doge to the city, was extinct.⁴³ Studying the text, Gianfranco knew that trouble was brewing.

In Mid-November 1949 Hemingway travelled with the manuscript in a battered briefcase to New York. There he met his longtime friend Marlene Dietrich, who had just finished her film “A Foreign Affair”, that they saw together at a private viewing. The German actress read the script and was depressed by the – as she thought – poor quality.

She said to her daughter Maria: “What has happened to him? Something is wrong with him, but I can’t tell Papa before I know it.” She only told Ernest that she was jealous of the figure of Renata.⁴⁴ Strangely there remained a typewritten copy with pencil corrections, 234 pages strong, in the hands of Marlene. Her daughter later gave it, together with the letters Hemingway wrote to Marlene to the Hemingway archives in Boston.

Travelling to Europe on the “Ile de France”, Hemingway met Virginia “Jigee” Viertel, wife of his friend novelist and scriptwriter Peter Viertel. Ernest insisted that she read the manuscript. When she joined Peter in Paris she told him about her reaction. “What could I say? He sat in the same room with me while I read most of it. So I just said that it made me feel like crying, which was true, and that he accepted as a compliment.” Privately she thought that it was “a satire of his earlier work”. Peter Viertel himself commented: “There was a tragic undercurrent to [the main character] Cantwell that gave the novel a special meaning, a confession of failure that

⁴³ Gianfranco Ivancich, *Ricordo*, p. 221.

⁴⁴ Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway*, New York 1969, p. 612.

quite obviously was Papa's way of airing his dissatisfaction with his own life."⁴⁵

Waiting for a reunion with Adriana, Hemingway had consoled himself on the ship with heavy flirtations with Jigee. Arriving in Paris Hemingway invited her to stay at the expensive Ritz Hotel, even regaling her with 2000 Dollars of pocket money to spend from his accumulated royalties in France.⁴⁶

Mary got extremely jealous when Hemingway would not come out of Jigee's hotel room. "It is now one hour and a half since I left Jigee Viertel's room 94, and Ernest said, I'll come in a minute,"⁴⁷ she wrote in her autobiography.

Like Mary, husband Peter suffered with a bout of jealousy when he joined Jigee and Ernest in Paris. He asked his wife "how serious their flirtation was, and she laughed nervously ... 'Don't be ridiculous,' she said, and went on to assure me that it was nothing more than a platonic friendship, that Papa was as protective of her as if she was his daughter, although I had noticed he didn't call her that, as he did most young women. There was a girl in Venice, Jigee told me, with whom he had fallen in love and who was the main reason for his returning to Italy. Her name was Adriana Ivancich, and Hemingway had told Jigee repeatedly that his Venetian girl was 'a beauty' as well as intelligent and talented. Despite all of his raving about Adriana, Jigee suspected that their relationship was merely an aging man's rather pathetic fixation. Adriana was an aristocrat, which appealed to Hemingway's secret snobbism. He had shown Jigee a photograph he carried in his wallet; Adriana had too prominent a nose to qualify for the term 'beauty' in Jigee's judgment, but she had lovely dark hair and eyes."⁴⁸

The Hemingways, his friend and agent Aaron Hotchner and the Viertels left Paris in a Packard on Christmas day 1949. They toured the south of France.

⁴⁵ Peter Viertel: *Dangerous Friends*, London 1992, pp. 84.

⁴⁶ Reynolds, Hemingway. *The Final Years*, p. 213.

⁴⁷ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 249. Reynolds, Hemingway. *The Final Years*, p. 213:

"Whenever an attractive female appeared the least vulnerable to her husband's magnetism, Mary became as unimportant as their chambermaid, suffering insults plain and oblique what would have sent a less determined woman to her lawyer." When Hemingway was young he had women older than him, when he got older he preferred the very young. Agnes von Kurowski was seven years older, Hadley Richardson eight years, and Pauline Pfeiffer four years older.

⁴⁸ Peter Viertel: *Dangerous Friends*, p. 84.

In Nice, the Viertels and Hotchner left by train and Ernest and Mary continued. Hotchner carried the last three chapters of "Across the River", that were handwritten and existed only in one copy.

New Years Eve they stayed in Nervi at the outskirts of Genoa. At the beginning of January 1950 they arrived in Venice. Ernest and Mary moved again into the "Gritti Palace Hotel". Hemingway was still working on corrections of the manuscript of "Across the River". He tried to convince himself that it was the best book he had written, but he remained very insecure about the public reception. In the middle of the night he called Fernanda Pivano and then showed her the manuscript. Serving her champagne, he insisted that she immediately read most of the text. He wanted to know what she thought of it. "I finished at dawn," the Italian professor wrote later, "The bottles of champagne were all empty, and in the ice buckets the water had become grey like that in the canals. We spoke little of the book, then Hemingway threw himself on his bed and I left the room on tiptoes. Of the book we never spoke again."⁴⁹

But more important to him was his reunion with Adriana. She later wrote about their meeting: "I was happy to see him again. I took a liking to that man, so tall and big, so sweet and sometimes nearly timid. ... He was always so understanding and gentle, how could I not like him? ... Not only that I understood him, but often I grasped what he was about to tell and to cut short his slow, sometimes verbose way, I finished the sentence for him. Or I interrupted with a remark that made him react or deviate the conversation and in this way our discussion became always more vivid and unforeseeable."⁵⁰

She reported Hemingway saying: "Remember this, Daughter. Between you and me there is little difference. We are alike inside."⁵¹ "I have always wished to have a daughter, but I only had three boys, now I have found you."

The effusions became more and more intimate. "Once on the impulse of an embrace, my lips joined his," Adriana wrote in her book "La Torre Bianca".

⁴⁹ Fernanda Pivano, *Persona and Personalità di Hemingway*, in: *Hemingway a Venezia*, p. 168.

⁵⁰ Ivancich, Torre, p. 52.

⁵¹ Ivancich, Torre, p. 71

“Oh, sorry, it was a mistake”, she said embarrassed. And Hemingway: “It was a pleasant mistake.” He would hope that she would make a mistake more often. Afterwards he closed his letters with the word “mistake”.⁵²

Fernanda Pivano - at the time 33 years old - who had spent much time with Hemingway in Cortina felt set back in second place with a hint of jealousy when she wrote: “He often saw Adriana Ivancich, especially at Harry’s Bar with two of her friends and he used to gaze dreamily into her large, bewitching eyes, and take in her curvaceous bust and long slim legs; she was aware and proud of the famous writer’s admiration and sat in posed cinema-like positions on the sofa, so as to show herself off to best effect: she would exchange glances with the writer, placing a hand beneath her chin and leaning forward a little and then giving in to adolescent giggles in an aside to her friend. Hemingway was quite literally lost in gazing at her.”⁵³

He also wrote a little fantastic story about himself and her with the title “Black Horse”. It was so intimate, that it could not be published. “Perhaps in a hundred years”, Hemingway commented.⁵⁴ The story is an extravaganza about the love of a man named Hemingstein for a black horse named Ivancich. Hemingstein invites the horse to the bar of the Hotel Ritz in Paris, where they meet a group of people, among them Afdera Franchetti, Carlo di Robilant and Gianfranco Ivancich, Adriana’s brother. Still years later Hemingway would call Adriana his “Black Horse”.⁵⁵

The Hemingways went up again to ski in the mountains of Cortina. And Adriana also turned up there. She was with her friend Giovanna Tofani who had the same age as Adriana. Hemingway, who called her Gio, liked her too.⁵⁶ Mary complained bitterly: “Adriana Ivancich ... was becoming our constant companion”.⁵⁷ Mary had to put up with it. “I was sure that no cautionary phrases of mine could arrest the process.” When mother Dora

⁵² Ivancich, Torre, p. 53.

⁵³ Pivano, Hemingway, Milan 1985.

⁵⁴ Ivancich, Torre, p. 61

⁵⁵ Ivancich, Torre, p. 166.

⁵⁶ Back to Venice in February he sent her a signed photo, later sent her letters, calling her daughter, saying that he missed her. (Information by Jonathan Mennell, later son in law of Giovanna).

⁵⁷ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 253.

called her daughter back, the writer accompanied her to Venice and stayed there some time near his Adorata.

In January he wrote Hotchner from Venice about his dilemma: “My god-damned heart that target of opportunity, sliced straight in half like the judgment of Herod. Only that they sliced mine as clean as with a butcher’s cleaver and Herod held up the attack.”⁵⁸ When Mary broke her left ankle and was immobilized in plaster her husband returned to Venice alone. He was free to court Adriana. When Mary returned to Venice, gossip was circulating at the lagoon about her husband and the Contessa. Hemingway mobilized his friends to prove that he had been “a good boy” in the meantime.⁵⁹



In Cortina with Adriana and Giovanna Tofani (J. F. Kennedy Library)

⁵⁸ Letter Hemingway to Hotchner, late January 1950, quoted Reynolds, Hemingway. *The Last Years*, p. 217.

⁵⁹ Fernanda Pivano also had to testify. See Pivano, p. 168.

During January, Hemingway also wrote two fairy tales for Adriana's little nephew Gherardo and for the daughter of Carlo Di Robilant, Olghina. In the "The Good Lion" and "The Faithfull Bull" Hemingway was drawing on his own African experiences. The tales are also linked to the town of Venice. The winged lion flies to the lagoon, where he sees the Piazza, the San Marco Basilica, the Campanile and even Harry's Bar. Both tales were published by the magazine "Holiday" with illustrations by Adriana.⁶⁰



With Adriana on the snow covered St. Mark's Square (J. F. Kennedy Library)

Besides Adriana Hemingway was again in the company of his hunting party. Nanyuki Franchetti had broken his leg while skiing in Cortina. But four days later he was shooting again. This was making an impression on the he-man Hemingway. He commented: "Very good boy".⁶¹ The Hemingways were guests at the Franchettis in their country house near Treviso. They were

⁶⁰ "Holiday" III, March 9th 1951.

⁶¹ Letter to Charles Scribner, January 6th 1950, Selected letters, pp. 684.

shooting with elephant guns on statues, that the family wanted to get rid of. He also met Carlo Kechler in his estate near Udine again.

Meeting in Paris March 1950

The Hemingways said goodbye to Venice on March 7th 1950. Ernest left Adriana his typewriter "Royal" as a gift. He said he hoped that it would bring her good luck. On the way to Paris Mary and Ernest were talking about his painful love, and he claimed freedom for his emotions. He: "I want to be a good boy. ... But my heart is not subject to discipline. It's a target of opportunity." Mary showed understanding. "My poor big kitten with a fractured heart. I wish I could help you.' I was not feeling ironic. He was trying to be honest and I felt sorry for him. I did not define 'helping' as turning him over to a budding Venetian girl."⁶²

In Paris at the Hotel "Ritz" Hemingway waited impatiently for Adriana. She should come to Paris to visit her friend Monique de Beaumont, whom she had known at a boarding school in Lausanne/Switzerland.⁶³ As she Adriana delayed her arrival Hemingway wrote to her friend Giovanna Tofani: "I love the horse and doubt if I could ever be cured of it." (horse was the nick name for Adriana, since he had written the story of the Black Horse). He said he had shown the covers Adriana had designed for his novel to his editor. "He selected the best one that we all liked the best. They only pay \$200 for the cover I found to my great disappointment; but it will come out all right in Lira and it is the same amount I had for my first book (entire) and it was quite a good one."⁶⁴

Finally Adriana arrived. His first words to her: "How much I missed you!" At the Bar in the Ritz together with the author was also his publisher Charles Scribner from New York. They talked about her drawing for the dust jacket of the new Hemingway-Novel and Scribner gave his consent. The next day Ernest and Adriana met at the Café Les Deux Magots. She was coming from the Louvre. She saw herself a bit like the Mona Lisa of Leonardo da Vinci, the central masterpiece of the Louvre's collection of paintings. She tells Hemingway of an episode in Venice, when a young man

⁶² Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 257.

⁶³ She stayed with the Beaumont family in Villa Molitor 62 in the 16th Arrondissement.

⁶⁴ Letter dated 18/3/50. (private property)

in a sailor uniform stands tall in front of her and says: “Benedetta tua madre quando ti ha fatto. Stava pensando a Leonardo da Vinci (Bless your mother when she made you. She must have thought of Leonardo da Vinci).”⁶⁵

They spoke again of her writing career. Hemingway: “You are a girl with a big but still undisciplined talent and prepared to go far. But you can do everything you desire and you should aspire to only the best”⁶⁶, he encouraged her. She: About what should we speak? He insisted: About you: She: “But I am not Beatrice and you are not Dante.” They looked out of the window of “Les Deux Magots” and he started again with his love talk: “Every man – if he would know you and would not be stupid – would stop. They would stop and come to ask you to marry him. Also me, I would immediately stop.”

“But you have Mary!”

“Mary is solid, good, full of courage. But sometimes you can walk a part of the road together and then take two different directions. That happens to many. It has already happened to me, but this time it would not happen again. Because I love you in my heart and I can’t do anything about it.”⁶⁷

By the sound of his voice Adriana understood that he was terribly serious, that he was not joking. He said he wanted to make her happy, “up to the end of my days.”

She thought: “The avalanche is starting to break away from the mountain. It will come down and everything is finished. It was all so nice and now will be finished.”

He: “Adriana, I would ask you to marry me, if I did not know that you would say no.”

She got up from her chair and said. “Let’s go! Let’s walk along the Seine and throw together these words into the river.”⁶⁸

On March 21st she and Monique accompanied the Hemingways to the port of Le Havre to board the “Il de France”, a ship on which Hemingway had

⁶⁵ Ivancich, Torre, p. 98.

⁶⁶ Ivancich, Torre, p. 99.

⁶⁷ Ivancich, Torre, p. 101.

⁶⁸ Ivancich, Torre, p. 101.

already crossed the Atlantic several times. Mary wrote: "It became Ernest's project for the morning to get her aboard the Ile de France and shown all over the ship, before the 'All Ashore'."⁶⁹ As soon as they were on sea Ernest wrote to his publisher Scribner about his troubled emotions. His heart, he said, felt like being fed into a meat grinder.⁷⁰ Adriana fired his emotions when she wrote immediately after his departure in clumsy English: "It is seven hours that your boat ran away from me and I have to say, this makes me rather sad. ... I have so many things to say that I prefer to skip them all – you understand, don't you?" In Italian she added: "I don't know why I write you so much ... perhaps, being used to talk to you for hours, I must also write you for hours."⁷¹

Back in Cuba 1950

Ernest's reckless behavior was taking his marriage to the edge of breakdown. In May 1950 Mary left him a complaining note: "My view of this marriage is that we have both been failures. .. My principal failure is that somehow I have lost your interest in me, your devotion and also your respect.... Your principal failure is that ... you have been careless and increasingly unthinking of my feelings ... undisciplined in your daily living. Both privately and in public you have insulted me and my dignity as a human being."⁷² Hemingway begged: "Stick with me, kitten."

But his obsession with Adriana remained. Immediately on his return to Cuba he sent her other letters. On April 11th he wrote, it were her voice, that he missed most. There were no other voices in the world like hers.⁷³

On June 3rd 1950 he informs her of his still ongoing corrections of the novel. He worked from early morning to after midnight. "Now my horse is

⁶⁹ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 259.

⁷⁰ Letter dated March 22nd 1950, quoted by Reynolds, Hemingway. The Final Years, p. 220.

⁷¹ Letter dated 21/22 March 1950, quoted by Kert, Hemingway, p. 453.

⁷² Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 263.

⁷³ Kert, Hemingway, p. 453.

under the starter's orders and there is no thing more I can do. It nearly kills me every time I read the book and I have read it now about 200 times."⁷⁴

He tells her of Gianfranco and his writing and how he is helping him. "I read some more of his book last night and it is very good. I wrote to Charley Scribner about it and he wants to see it very much. Also wrote for a good translator from Italian to English."

Then he tells her about his work on a new project. "I have a long short story about one time when we were driven by a storm when we were doing anti-submarine work in the sea during the war. It is over 30,000 words and just the happenings of one day. I have outlined the end and will finish it. I know I make it sound awfully dull but really it is not." At the end of the letter he inevitably comes back to his love for her.

"Now I write an egoistical letter because I am lonesome for you and I do not want to say these things to anyone else. Since I was Gianfranco's age have been head of the family, I paid all my father's debts; stopped my mother's extravagances as well as I could; provided for her and the other children, fought in all the wars, brought up children, married and unmarried, paid all bills and wrote as well as I could. So you please believe I am a semi-serious animal and that I would never encourage anything that was bad for Gianfranco nor Jackie [Adriana's other brother]. I am prejudiced about you because I am in love with you. But in any situation, under any circumstances where it was my happiness or your happiness I would always want your happiness to win and would withdraw mine from the race."⁷⁵

Three weeks later he continued to profess his love: "I will always love you in my heart and I cannot help that. But if it is better for you I will never write it in a letter or say it to you ever. All I will try to do is try to serve you well and be happy company when we meet. ... Nobody can control what their heart feels if they have any heart. But I can control what I say or do and I give you this as an absolute promise if you want it.

⁷⁴ Hemingway explained to his German visitor Heinz Helfgen in 1953 his method of working, that consisted of reading his text over and over again and then adding a few pages. "My main occupation is the reading of my own manuscripts," he said. (Heinz Helfgen: *Ich radle um die Welt. Burma – Indochina – Japan – USA – Grüne Hölle*, Gütersloh 1954, pp. 297.)

⁷⁵ Hemingway, *Selected Letters*, pp. 699.

I get terribly lonely for you; sometimes so it is unbearable. But if there is nothing to be done about that there is nothing to be done. I work hard but after I work I am twice as lonely. On the sea I get so lonely for you that I cannot stand it.”⁷⁶

Hemingway had no inhibitions to talk or write to friends openly about his crazy love for the young girl. To Charles Scribner who knew of the relationship between the characters Adriana-Renata in “Across the River”, he wrote: “Also that I love A[driana] to die of it and that I love Mary as she should be loved; I hope.”⁷⁷ Mary fell back to second place in his heart, or even less.

On September 9th 1950 he wrote again to his publisher: “You didn’t understand it and did not like it and didn’t believe there were any such girls as Renata until you met A[driana]. But in later life, if you live, you and O’Hara will both understand it and know the passage about the Veneto from Latisana, where I met A. waiting two hours in the rain to go duck shooting, are not from Baedeker nor Michelin. They are from your heart of something, or something awful as we used to say.”⁷⁸

Only a platonic affair?

The troubling question is whether the feelings of love were only one-sided. Or was there a consummated love between a famous middle aged writer and a very young girl of the Venetian nobility? The fact that in the book the alter egos of Ernest and Adriana make love intrigued not only the Hemingway circle.

Adriana’s brother Gianfranco defended the reputation of his sister: He said he was sure there was no sex. He spoke of “mental idyll”, a “sentimental platonism”.⁷⁹ “It was a relationship of a grandfather with his grandchild.” Or between a father and a daughter. She called him Papa, he called her Daughter.

⁷⁶ Ivancich, Torre, pp. 192. Letter June 26th 1950.

⁷⁷ Letter to Charles Scribner, 9-10 July 1950, Selected Letters, p. 704.

⁷⁸ Letter to Charles Scribner, 9 September 1950, Selected Letters, pp. 712. (John O’Hara had written a review of “Across the River” for New York Times Book Review 10 September 1950, pp. 30-31.

⁷⁹ Interview with Gianfranco Ivancich in “Corriere della Sera “ August 19th, 1998.

Meyers mentions that Ernest and his then wife Pauline had longed for a daughter when Gregory was born 1931, one year after Adriana's birth. In this way the young Italian could be seen as his desired daughter. Meyers adds: "The father-daughter relationship helped to prevent sexual consummation."⁸⁰

In Bernice Kert's view Hemingway was prepared to elope with the young woman. Adriana enjoyed the power she had over the famous man, but having been raised in a certain way, she conducted herself in accordance with the rules of her world".⁸¹ Piero Ambrogio Pozzi thinks that only the prohibiting social and cultural circumstances of the turn of the 60s of the last century made the love affair impossible. He spoke of "a love made of renunciation, at that time impossible by the difference of age, of Ernest's marital state, and Adriana as member of the most austere nobility, and a heavy social prejudice".⁸²

Ann writes after carefully examining the correspondence: "There remains the fact, that Adriana clearly was not in love with him. Non the less she cared for him deeply, not as a lover, but as a gentle, understanding friend."⁸³ "He longed for her, but never, at least according to currently available evidence, consummated his desire for her."⁸⁴

Ada Rosa Alfonso, director of the Hemingway Museum of Havana, is an isolated voice, when she declared herself convinced that it was more than platonic love. "In the way the writer creates the character of Renata, the alter ego of Adriana, I believe it has been more than platonic love. I think it was a passionate and tender, if not carnal love."

Altogether it seems, that there is a man in his midlife crisis, with problems in his writing career, with depressions and other health problems arriving, becoming disillusioned with his marriage, looses his head, falls head over heels in love with a girl, that could be his daughter, ignoring that he lost his judgment and that he made himself ridiculous and a fool. His mind blurred

⁸⁰ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 441.

⁸¹ Kert, Hemingway, p. 457.

⁸² Piero Ambrogio Pozzi: Adriana Ivancich Biaggini, in: Enciclopedia delle Donne (internet).

⁸³ Ann Doyle and Neal B. Huston, Ernest Hemingway's Letters to Adriana Ivancich, in: The Library Chronicle of the University of Texas at Austin, 30 (1985), p. 19.

⁸⁴ Doyle/Huston, Letters, p. 20.

by this mad love started to be inspired for a new novel, that by the circumstances had to be a failure.

It remains speculation, whether he was at one point prepared to give up the safety of his marriage with a loving and devoted wife Mary. Another divorce would have meant an enormous financial burden and an outlook on a precarious future. He might have had to give up Cuba and his Caribbean fishing and have to live in Venice. In the craziness of his love he indulged in fancies about marrying Adriana, but he never took any real step in this direction.

Adriana once tried herself to explain to Hemingway what she thought of their relationship: "Ti voglio bene, Papa... For voler bene, in the Italian sense, you need friendship, tenderness, feeling, need of each other, respect." In her memoir "La Torre Bianca" she wrote: "Perhaps some think that I liked Hemingway like a father. It is not like that. My own father was of a rigid honesty, absolutely of straight morals: punctuality, discipline and severity, but always coupled with comprehension and a deep love. Hemingway belongs to another culture, another civilization. He has the courage of my father, but he uses that in a different way; that is the same with his intelligence. Often I have the impression of being next to a big child. Sometimes I feel the desire to protect him against himself. Sometimes I have the impression that he seeks in me an answer for his inner restlessness. If one would say that between us sometimes I am the older person, everybody would laugh. But it is like that."⁸⁵

But Adriana played down the importance of their relationship when she said in 1981: "At the end, what did he want of me? Simply the joy that I could give him talking and discussing."⁸⁶ He would have liked to go further, but there was no way. She was not physically attracted to the man, 30 years older than her. "As son Gregory puts it: "Certainly she was not in love with him."⁸⁷

As a young man Hemingway had been very handsome, and he used to be well groomed and dressed. But in later years he lost his Hollywood-actor-like looks. He started to neglect himself. In the Caribbean sun he wore only

⁸⁵ Ivancich, Torre, p. 141.

⁸⁶ Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 8.

⁸⁷ Gregory Hemingway, Papa, Boston 1976, p. 113.

shorts and shirts, he grew to a weight of more than 200 pounds and his facial skin showed signs of keratosis, a state of pre-cancer, caused by too much sun, that he tried to cover with his white beard.

Adriana never made a negative comment on his appearance, but she may have thought like Jigee Viertel, who was also courted by the writer. Jigee explained to her husband why she did not feel physically attracted to Hemingway: "His protruding stomach and the faintly unkempt odor – that and the rash on his face would have been enough to put her off, she said."⁸⁸ His excessive drinking habit did not disturb Adriana. She said she never saw him drunk.

There are suggestions that Adriana would have lived with Hemingway, if he would give up Mary. In that case she could have stayed next to the man she idolized, enjoy the glamorous society and his wealth. Biographer Kenneth S. Lynn: "Adriana was prepared to marry Hemingway as a means of restoring her family's declining fortunes and of fulfilling her dream of hobnobbing with glamorous people, but she was not physically attracted to him. Hemingway, in sum, could have her only if she was Mrs. Hemingway. Such was the intensity of his belief that she was smarter, lovelier, and infinitely better bred than Mary that he might eventually have been tempted to pay the price she had set on herself, had not Mary come down on him hard after a particularly ugly scene in front of the Ivanciches at the Finca."⁸⁹

Biographer Meyers sees mother Dora as a kind of a matchmaker who pushed her daughter in the adventure. "Dora ...seemed to act in a cold-blooded and exploitive manner by encouraging a friendship that could only lead to sexual rumors, an adulterous liaison or a disastrous marriage."⁹⁰

Both mother and daughter should not have continued to play a far too long-lasting game with the aging author, in which he lost his dignity and self-respect. When it was clear to Adriana and Dora that Hemingway was madly in love, they should have shown him the limits. Friendship, even veneration, but not the acceptance and nourishment of this love that lasted for more than five years. The damage was on both sides.

⁸⁸ Peter Viertel: *Dangerous Friends*, p. 85.

⁸⁹ Kenneth Lynn, *Hemingway*, Cambridge/Mass. 1987, p. 535.

⁹⁰ Meyers, *Hemingway*, p. 451.

The book

Aaron Hotchner who worked for "Cosmopolitan" arranged for the not yet finished novel to be serialized in the magazine starting in February 1950 and running until June. It was a sanitized version, leaving out everything that was too erotic. Martha Gellhorn, reading the first installments, was upset by the quality and the content. "I think ... he will end in the nut house," she wrote to William Walton.⁹¹ When Harvey Breit, who worked for the "New York Times", inquired about *Renata*, Hemingway answered it was a portrait of someone he loved more than anyone in the world.⁹²

In a letter written from the Hotel Gritti on the 1st of July 1950 he told actress Marlene Dietrich he had finished the final version: "Yesterday I died with my Colonel for the last time and said good-bye to the girl, and it was worse than any other time."

After 21 months of labor the writer delivered the finished book to his publisher "Scribner's". "Time" magazine sent a list of questions to Hemingway in Cuba. The author answered in the third person: "The novel is about life, death, happiness and sorrow. It is also about Venice and the Veneto. It is the best novel that Hemingway could write and he tried to give the essence of all the other matters, plus that of the war."

On his criticism of the military leaders of the Second World War he commented: "Do you know any non-bitter fighting soldier or anyone who was in Hürtgen [battle of Hürtgenwald] to the end who can love the authors of that national catastrophe which killed off the flower of our fighting men in a stupid frontal attack?"⁹³

Hemingway was extremely nervous about the forthcoming official publication of "Across the River", planned for the September 7th 1950.

The critics were scathing. "The American reviews bristled with such adjectives as disappointing, embarrassing, distressing, trivial, tawdry, garrulous, and tired."⁹⁴ Ernest wrote to Mary, on a visit in Chicago, on September 11th: "Please don't worry about the reviewsFinally had a

⁹¹ Letter March 9th 1950, quote Reynolds, Hemingway. The Final Years, p. 223.

⁹² Kert, Hemingway, p. 455.

⁹³ "Time" 56 (Sept. 11th 1950)

⁹⁴ Baker, Hemingway, p. 486.

letter from Venice. Afdera [Franchetti, sister of Nanyuki] told everybody at the Lido last summer that I was desperately in love with her. ... There was a picture in EUROPEO of Adriana and Afdera with this caption: Afdera and Adriana equal Renata. But the story was ok. So no harm done. But what an Afdera... Nobody in Venice believes her but foreigners do. .. So when you hear she has been here with me and what a wonderful time we always have, just laugh.”⁹⁵

In America it was not immediately known, that a young Italian girl, who had also done the cover design, had been the real model for Renata. To protect Adriana’s reputation in Italy Hemingway had ordered that the book could not be published in Italy before 1952.

Hemingway - at least in his fantasy - had betrayed Mary with the book. So it was paradoxical and of bitter irony, that he dedicated the novel “For Mary with love”.

The novelist John O’Hara, a longtime admirer of Hemingway, tried to save his idol from the choir of negative critics when he was asked to write a piece for the “New York Times Book Review”. But he made it worse by exaggerated praise. He spoke of Hemingway as “the most important author living today... the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare ... the most important, the outstanding author out of the millions of writers who have lived since 1616.”⁹⁶

Raymond Chandler’s reaction was also positive but more realistic: “Candidly, it’s not the best thing he’s done, but it’s still a hell of a sight better than anything his detractors could do. ... Obviously he was not trying to write a masterpiece; but in a character not too unlike his own trying to sum up the attitude of a man who is finished and knows it, and is bitter and angry about it. Apparently Hemingway had been very sick and he was not sure that he was going to get well and he put down on paper in a rather cursory way how that made him feel [about] the things of life he has most valued.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 273.

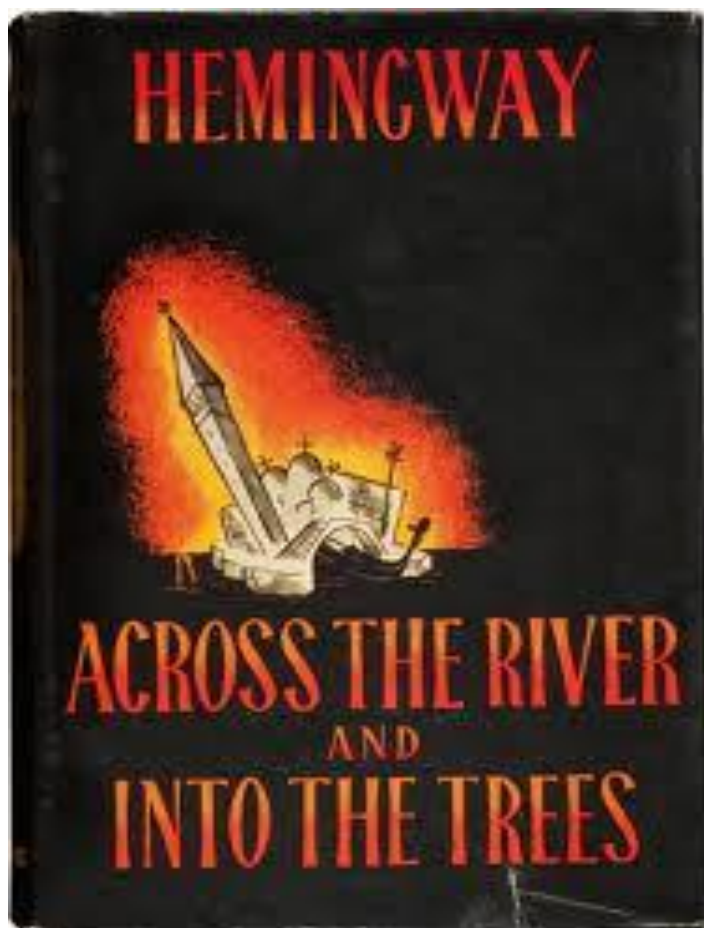
⁹⁶ Lynn, Hemingway, pp. 556.

⁹⁷ Quotation from Lynn, Hemingway, p. 557.

Biographer Lynn thought it would have been better to distill the best parts to a longer short story.⁹⁸ There are the magical opening hunting scenes in the Veneto and the masterly description of the Colonel's death.

Unaffected by the bad reviews, the novel sold well. The title remained on the "New York Times" Bestseller List for 21 months.

After the publication, the gossip about Hemingway and the Venetian girl began to spread. Adriana: "I remember his pain about this gossip. He wanted to avoid at all cost to do me any harm." At first he wanted to give a declaration to the press, then he changed his mind because it would have worsened the situation.⁹⁹



Adriana's cover design

⁹⁸ Lynn, Hemingway, p. 555.

⁹⁹ Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 10.

Fiction and Reality

Hemingway was above all a newspaper reporter. He wrote about things that he had seen and lived through. Rarely did he completely invent a story and the place where it happened. So most of the characters and places in Venice in the winter 1948/49 were easy to identify. Hemingway himself portrayed himself as the Colonel Cantwell.¹⁰⁰

Adriana is – at least in her appearance, her background and her age – clearly to recognize as the main female character Renata. Hemingway at a certain moment says to Adriana: “You gave my Renata a face.” In the book he describes her entry in Harry’s Bar: “Then she came into the room, shining in her youth and tall striding beauty and the carelessness the wind had made of her hair. She had a pale, almost olive-colored skin, a profile that could break your, or anyone else’s heart and her dark hair, of an alive texture, hung down over her shoulders. ... Her voice was low and delicate and she spoke English with caution.”¹⁰¹ “And look at Renata’s eyes, he thought. They are probably the most beautiful things she has with the longest honest lashes I have ever seen and she never uses them for anything except to look at you honestly and straight. What a damn wonderful girl.”¹⁰²

Both girls are nearly nineteen years old, from a noble Venetian family, orphaned on the father’s side, the father killed by the Germans¹⁰³, in reality under unclear circumstances after the war. Both write poetry. The Colonel asks: “Don’t you write any more poetry?” – “It was young girl poetry. Like young girl painting. Everyone is talented at a certain age.”¹⁰⁴

Both live in a Palazzo in the heart of Venice and both families own a country house half destroyed during the war. The town of Latisana named in the book is the real location of the country estate. Real is the mentioned temporary bridge over the Tagliamento river. The bridge had been bombed by American war planes that also hit the Ivancich estate on the banks of the river. “Eight hundred yards away the smashed buildings and out buildings

¹⁰⁰ With the skipper/artist Thomas Hudson in “Islands in the Stream” he used another alter ego.

¹⁰¹ Across, p. 69.

¹⁰² Across, p. 74.

¹⁰³ Across, p. 105.

¹⁰⁴ Across, p. 80.

of what was now a ruined country house built by Longhena".¹⁰⁵ He describes the willow and mulberry trees in the marshes, trees that Adriana later drew for a draft of the cover of the book.¹⁰⁶

Many critics interpreted the name Renata as "Reborn", Cantwell felt reborn in her youth. She was a symbolic figure. Carlos Baker: "She could stand for the freshness, innocence, courage, and idealism that both Ernest and Colonel Cantwell had enjoyed in the days before the war had aged and embittered them."¹⁰⁷ But Gianfranco Invancich was convinced that Hemingway borrowed the name from the pianist Renata Borgatti, whom he had known in Cortina in 1923.¹⁰⁸

Hemingway's female figures were usually weak compared to the males. Hemingway is best in "Men without Women". The figure of Renata is idealized like that of Maria in "For Whom the Bell Tolls". More successful are the women of the more masculine type like Lady Brett Ashley in "The Sun also Rises" or the good companion Pilar in the Spanish Civil War.¹⁰⁹

The Colonel Richard Cantwell is Hemingway's alter ego, fused with some elements of his wartime friend Colonel Charles "Buck" Lanham. Cantwell is 51, the writer at the time 49 years old. He is hard and fragile at the same time, he is disillusioned and sometimes bitter and inspired by a young love. Both men's health is impaired. Cantwell suffers from a severe heart condition and war wounds, feeds himself mannitol hexanitrite, pills that Hemingway used himself, and knows that he has not long to live. Hemingway's health was damaged by heavy drinking and a series of accidents. He was already suffering from depression, and the death theme had been accompanying him for a long time, and was still accentuated by the Second World War. Cantwell's excessive alcohol consumption in the book might equal Hemingway's drinking habit during his stay in Venice.

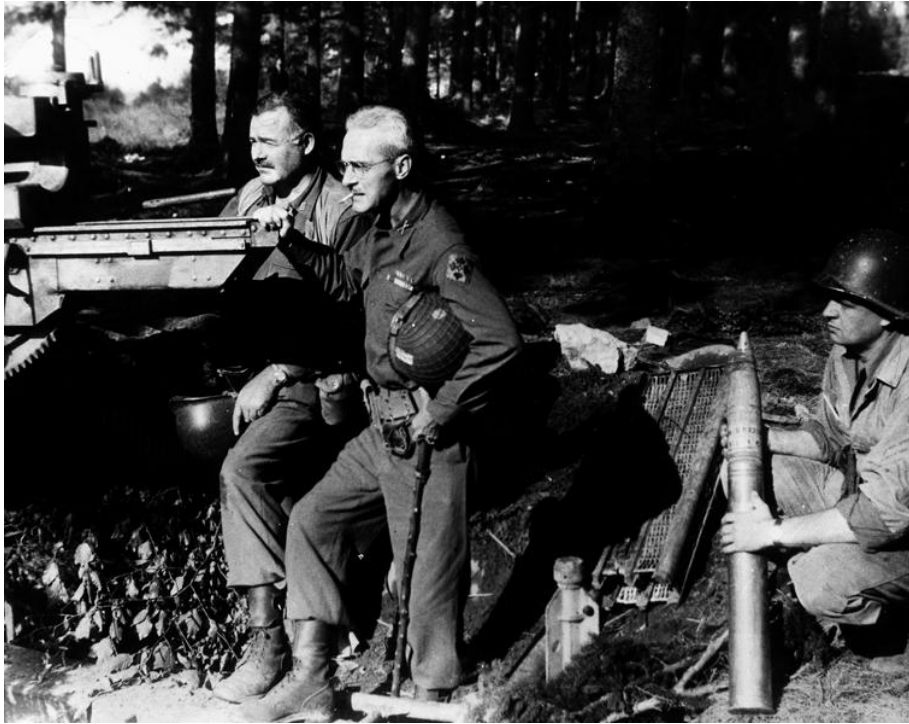
¹⁰⁵ Across, p. 14, Gianfranco Ivancich had insisted that he named the architect Longhena.

¹⁰⁶ Across, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ Baker, Hemingway, p. 477.

¹⁰⁸ Gianfranco Ivancich, *Ricordo Personale*, p. 220.

¹⁰⁹ R. Penn Warren, Introduction to „A Farewell to Arms“ in *Three Novels of E. H.*, New York 1962 p. XXVIII: "His best woman characters, by the way, are those who must nearly approximate the man; that is, they embody the masculine virtues and point of view characteristic of Hemingway's work."



Hemingway with Colonel Charles “Buck” Lanham during battle in WW2

(John F. Kennedy Library)

Cantwell and Hemingway both had been on the Italian battlefield in the First World War, both were wounded in Fossalta on the banks of the Piave River some miles north-east of the lagoon city. Cantwell visits the place like Hemingway, “where he had been hit, out on the river bank. It was easy to find because of the bend of the river, and where the heavy machine gun post had been the crater was smoothly grassed. It had been cropped, by sheep or goats, until it looked like a designed depression in a golf course.”¹¹⁰ There he performs the same ceremony Hemingway had done himself: he defecates on the spot and buries a bank note in the sand.¹¹¹

The real difference in reality and fiction is in Renata’s love affair with the Colonel. Adriana has a completely different personality than Renata. The fictional character does not seem a girl. She lacks the shyness and timidity of an 18-year-old of 1949 in catholic Italy coming from a well-born family. She is much more mature than Adriana and behaves and talks like a woman.

¹¹⁰ Across, p. 18.

¹¹¹ There is a kind of inflation taking place. Hemingway himself buried a thousand lire note, Cantwell a 10 000 Lire note. (Baker, Hemingway, 648)

Adriana can't recognize herself in Renata. She told the writer: "In my view a girl like this does not exist."¹¹²

Renata is frivolous, even provocative. Adriana possibly was a virgin and lacked all sexual experience. In the book she takes the initiative, follows him into his room at the Gritti. She asks: "Kiss me once again and make the buttons of your uniform hurt me but not too much."¹¹³ The culmination is the love scene in the gondola. After they had already drunk some bottles of wine and champagne they hire a gondola and under the cover of a blanket have sex - several times, despite the freezing cold and a lot of alcohol and though the lover suffers from heart disease. She can't have enough of it. She is the demanding part: "Let's do it again."¹¹⁴ The gondoliere was "unknowing, yet knowing all".¹¹⁵

It seems Hemingway in his imagination preferred sex in special circumstances like the love scene in a sleeping bag in "For Whom the Bell Tolls". The next day, after the exhausting gondola experience she is again in his hotel bed in the "Gritti". Renata leads a free and independent life in the company of adults. In reality Adriana was chaperoned nearly all the time by her mother, by her brother or other friends.

The love of Hemingway/Cantwell for Adriana/Renata is real. But the love talk with Renata is as banal as later in Hemingway's letters. "'You're nice,' he said. 'You're also very beautiful and lovely and I love you.' - 'You always say that and I don't know what it means but I like to hear it.' - How old are you now?' - 'Nearly nineteen.'"¹¹⁶ "I love you very much the way you are. And you are the most beautiful woman I have ever known, or seen, even in paintings by good painters."¹¹⁷

The Colonel speaks of marriage, as Hemingway at a certain point to Adriana while they were together in Paris: "We could be married." - "No, she said. I thought it over and I thought we should not."¹¹⁸ The Colonel was married three times before. Hemingway was in his fourth marriage with Mary.

¹¹² Ivancich, Torre, p. 144.

¹¹³ Across, p. 94.

¹¹⁴ Across, p. 132.

¹¹⁵ Across, p. 138.

¹¹⁶ Across, p. 71.

¹¹⁷ Across, p. 97.

¹¹⁸ Across, p. 81.

Hemingway can't refrain from referring in bitter terms to his ex-wife Martha Gellhorn, who is clearly identifiable in the book : "She was an ambitious woman and I was away too much. ... She had more ambition than Napoleon and about the talent of the average High School Valedictorian. .. She married me to advance herself in army circles, and have better contacts for what she considered her profession, or her art. She was a journalist."¹¹⁹

All together: the love scenes are a failure. Hemingway becomes sentimental and pathetic.

Hemingway wanted to write a book about the Second World War. Up to Venice he had been unable to put his war experience on paper. He knew how difficult it was. In the book, Renata asks why he would not write about his war career. "No. I have not the talent for it and I know too much. Almost any liar writes more convincingly than a man who was there ... Boys who were sensitive and cracked and kept all their valid first impressions of their days of battles, or their three days, or even their four, write books. They are good books but can be dull if you have been there. Then others write to profit quickly from the war they never fought in."¹²⁰

Finally the war was interwoven in the love affair. The Colonel tells her of his involvement in the fighting of summer 1944 to winter 1945, from the landing in Normandy to the conquest of Paris, of the battles on German ground in the Schnee Eifel and in the Hürtgenwald – exactly the trail Hemingway went as war correspondent with the US-Army. Unconvincingly the girl is very interested and asks for more. Cantwell continues, though "he knew how boring any man's war is to any other man."¹²¹ And to Renata in another moment: "I don't know what to tell you... Everything about war bores those who have not made it."¹²²

Five years after the war his hatred of the Generals came out. Of Bernard Montgomery the coward, Jacques Leclerc the conceited, Walter Bedell Smith who sent his men into battle without a clear idea of the situation. He, Hemingway, had been without need in the first line of fire, and the military leaders were giving their orders far away in comfort and security. Decisions

¹¹⁹ Across, p. 178.

¹²⁰ Across, pp. 116.

¹²¹ Across, p. 21.

¹²² Across, p. 119.

were taken in Versailles nearly 400 kilometers away from the front. "In our army, you know, practically no Generals have ever fought. It is quite strange and the top organization dislikes those who have fought."¹²³

The worst war experience for Hemingway had been the battle of Hürtgenwald. The description of that battle covers in all details nearly 20 pages.¹²⁴ Hemingway had accompanied his friend Colonel "Buck" Lanham there for several weeks in November and December 1944. The Hürtgenwald was a nearly impenetrable forest south of Aachen.¹²⁵ Tanks could not get through the trees, pilots could not see anything on the ground. The weather with rain, snow, fog, cold was prohibiting. The Americans encountered heavy resistance by the Germans, well dug in in their shelters. In the first days the Americans lost 4500 men and advanced only half a mile. At the end 87 per cent of the soldiers were wounded or dead. All together the loss was 33 000 men. The soldiers spoke of the "death factory".

On December 4th 1944, the last day of the battle, Hemingway nearly lost his life when a deep flying Stuka fired on his jeep. Hemingway, without need for his reporting job, that he had already half given up, remained up to the end on the spot. He would have considered himself a coward, if he had abandoned his friend Lanham in this extreme situation. Hemingway wrote later: "I think I never had a stronger friendship, than with Buck in the Hurtgenwald." In the figure of Cantwell the author fused himself with Lanham, the Colonel.

The battle left a trauma on the writer. In the book: "Now every second man in it was dead and the others nearly all wounded. In the belly, the head, the feet or the hands, the neck, the back, the lucky buttocks, the unfortunate chest and the other places. Tree burst wounds hit men where they would never be wounded in open country. And all the wounded were wounded for life."

Apart from war, love and death, Hemingway in real and fictional life goes duck hunting with some Italian noblemen in the marshes near the Tagliamento river. The magical opening scene of the novel may reflect

¹²³ Across, p. 104.

¹²⁴ Across, pp. 196.

¹²⁵ See Jobst Knigge: Hemingway und die Deutschen, Hamburg 2009

Hemingway's real experience in the early morning of a freezing December day of 1948.

His Italian hunting and drinking pals Barone Alvarito and Count Andrea were shaped after Franchetti and Kechler, whom he had met during his stay in Cortina at the turn of 1948/49. "Some nice Italian kids I met up in Cortina own it,"¹²⁶ as the Colonel says to his driver on the hunting estate.

Barone Alvarita: "He was almost tall, beautiful built in his town clothes, and he was the shyest man the Colonel had ever known. He was not shy from ignorance, nor from being ill at ease, nor from any defect. He was basically shy, as certain animals are."¹²⁷

Conte Andrea: "At the bar a tall, very tall, man, with a ravaged face of great breeding, merry blue eyes and the long, loose-coupled body of a buffalo wolf." He wore a "handsome tweed coat that must have been entering, at least, its twentieth year".¹²⁸

The places in Venice are real: the Hotel "Gritti" and "Harry's Bar". About the "Gritti": "The Colonel indicated the three-storey, rose-coloured, small, pleasant place abutting on the Canal. It had been a dependence of the Grand Hotel – but now it was its own hotel and a very good one."¹²⁹

The bar of the "Gritti": "The Colonel looked out of the window and the door of the bar on to the waters of the Grand Canal. He could see the big black hitching post for the gondolas and the late afternoon winter light on the wind-swept water."¹³⁰

"Harry's Bar": The owner Cipriani does not appear personally but is mentioned several times as friend of the Colonel. "You find everything on earth at Harry's." – "Yes, my Colonel. Except, possibly, happiness,"¹³¹ the waiter comments. He considers "Harry's Bar" as his home. "He was pulling

¹²⁶ Across, p. 12.

¹²⁷ Across, p. 111.

¹²⁸ Across, p. 68.

¹²⁹ Across, p. 46.

¹³⁰ Across, p. 48.

¹³¹ Across, p. 60.

open the door of Harry's bar and was inside and he had made it again and was at home."¹³² The Greek Princess Aspasia is named as a guest.¹³³

Gianfranco Ivancich

Adriana's brother Gianfranco – ten years older than her - had been fighting in the Second World War with the Italian and German troops in North Africa. He had been badly wounded in the foot, which nearly had to be amputated. Back in Italy after the Armistice he joined the partisans and worked for the American secret service OSS.

After the war Gianfranco wanted to emigrate to New York. He spent some time there in the circles of the Italian High Society. The Venetian industrialist Giorgio Cini jr. – who at the time was sentimentally linked to actress Merle Oberon – offered him a job at his shipping agency Sidarma in Cuba. That was quite independent from the fact, that Hemingway was living there.

When Gianfranco met Hemingway in Venice in January 1949 he had just come back from New York. He did not know much about the writer. During the time of Fascism, Hemingway's books were banned in Italy. Gianfranco knew only "For Whom the Bell Tolls" and he discovered some similarities with his own experience as a partisan.

Gianfranco first met the writer at the Bar of the "Gritti", where they talked about their common war experiences. Both had been wounded in the legs. Gianfranco was still limping. In spite of their difference of age they felt as "compagni d'arme".¹³⁴ When Gianfranco announced that he would take up work in Cuba, Hemingway said: "I wait for you at my place."

Gianfranco established himself in Cuba in the beginning of November 1949. As he had no place to stay, he was lodged in a guest room of the Finca Vigía. Hemingway had a deep feeling for him and treated him like a "surrogate son"¹³⁵ or "a male version of a vicarious substitute for Adriana", as Meyers

¹³² Across, p. 68.

¹³³ Across, p. 63.

¹³⁴ Gianfranco Ivancich, *Ricordo*, p. 220.

¹³⁵ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 429.

put it.¹³⁶ Hemingway wrote to Adriana, that Gianfranco cheered him up, when he longed for her.¹³⁷ Often they would talk of Venice and the Veneto. “La nostalgia was the real leitmotiv in that villa in the tropics always open to the real friends.”¹³⁸

His job with the shipping agency did not last long. In April 1950 he was out of work. Reynolds judged he was not made for “tedious employment”.¹³⁹ Though Hemingway defended him. His failure in his work was not his fault; it was the trauma he suffered in the Second World War.¹⁴⁰

Inspired by his mentor, Gianfranco wanted to embark on an own writing career.¹⁴¹ Hemingway encouraged him. His writing was “no waste of time”, he said.¹⁴² Obviously Gianfranco finished a novel and Hemingway did everything to have the book published with Scribner’s. But nothing came out of it.

After having lived for at least three years as a permanent lodger at the Finca Vigía, he bought himself a little farm near Ranco Boyeros. The family had sold some land in the Veneto region and also Hemingway had advanced some money.¹⁴³ Also later the writer supported his Italian friend, often in financial difficulties. He gave him the last manuscript of the “Old Man and the Sea”, to sell it in case he may be in need of money, he wrote Adriana.¹⁴⁴ On and off Gianfranco, taking advantage of Hemingway’s friendship, stayed in Cuba for seven years. In 1956 he married a woman from Cuba called Cristina Sandoval. Hemingway detested her, and in several letters to Adriana he complained about her.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁶ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 443

¹³⁷ Letter Hemingway to Adriana April 21st 1950.

¹³⁸ Gianfranco Ivancich, Ricordo, p. 221.

¹³⁹ Reynolds, Hemingway, The Final Years, p. 218.

¹⁴⁰ Doyle/Huston, Letters, p. 21.

¹⁴¹ Letter to Harvey Breit, July 3th 1956, Selected Letters, p. 861.

¹⁴² Letter to Adriana May 9th 1950.

¹⁴³ Kert, Hemingway, p. 469. Letter Hemingway to Adriana July 19th 1953.

¹⁴⁴ Letter June 16th 1952.

¹⁴⁵ Doyle/Huston, Letters, p. 36.

Adriana's stay in Cuba

Before Hemingway left for Cuba in 1950, he invited Adriana and her friend Giovanna Tofani to see him at the Finca Vigía. Gio, as Hemingway called her, had already the permission of her mother to leave for Cuba. But in summer 1950, while holidaying in Capri together with Adriana she met her future husband, industrialist Giuseppe Fiorentini. He talked her out to go to Cuba and pushed for an immediate marriage, that took place in September.¹⁴⁶

Mary was not amused about Adriana's forthcoming visit: "When Ernest announced that he thought he should invite Adriana and her mother to visit us in Cuba for a reunion with Gianfranco, I demurred. 'Invite them, by all means. But it should be both of us – me, too, as hostess – who do the inviting. For propriety.'"¹⁴⁷ "The idea of two Venetian ladies traipsing down to Cuba to visit us seemed utterly irrational to me. At nineteen or twenty Adriana could use more education on numerous subjects, and travel was educational. But she had the whole of Europe closer at hand and much less expensive." Mother Dora accepted the offer. Wouldn't the trip give her an occasion to see her son Gianfranco in Cuba? Did she deliberately overlooked Hemingway's infatuation with her daughter? Ernest supported the trip with a substantial cheque to cover the travel expenses.¹⁴⁸

Since summer 1950 Hemingway had desperately waited for the arrival of Adriana, in his letters to Venice he became more and more exited and at home always more ill-tempered. Mary: "He could barely stand the waiting for Adriana's bright, admiring glances. He was less than a good companion around the house."¹⁴⁹ On October 5th she complained in a letter to Lillian Ross, that he called her "garbage woman".¹⁵⁰ A week later she wrote to Charles Scribner: "He has called me, and repeated the names ... whore, bitch, liar, moron. ... On several occasions I called him shit. ... It looks like the disintegration of a personality to me."¹⁵¹ She also criticized his writings:

¹⁴⁶ Information by Jonathan Mennell, son in law of Giovanna Tofani, to the author.

¹⁴⁷ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 255.

¹⁴⁸ Reynolds, Hemingway. The Final Years, p. 229.

¹⁴⁹ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 270.

¹⁵⁰ Kert, Hemingway, S. 455.

¹⁵¹ Quote by Reynolds, Hemingway. The Final Years, p. 231.

“When people mature they write better, on the other hand, you are writing worse.”¹⁵²

He was afraid that war on the Korean peninsula would in the last moment ruin his plans. He wrote to Adriana: “If the war comes, then it will last between 6 to 10 years, and everything will be a mess, and everybody will have the time to take part. Naturally we will be the winners, but everything will be destroyed. Let’s enjoy the period before that next war. I promise to do my best to protect in the first place you and your family and after that as many as possible. You can be sure that I won’t do anything stupid.”¹⁵³

At the beginning of September, “Across the River” was published. Some weeks later Hollywood gossip queen Louella Parsons spread the news that Hemingway’s marriage had broken down because of an Italian contessa.¹⁵⁴ There was no Italian version of the book, but many in the best society of Venice understood English. The book began to circulate and – as Adriana was easily be identified - caused some scandal in the lagoon city.

Autumn came and the arrival approached. Hectic preparations were going on in the Finca Vigía. Hemingway wrote to Adriana, trying to be funny and as always exaggerating: “Mary pulls down the house to rebuild it in a way, that it will be suited for your mother, for you and Gio¹⁵⁵. The builders are coming destroy and restore, and then follow the painters. First we had to abandon the washhouse (that means nothing to me), then the dining was pulled down and we had to eat in the library. We are like refugees, with two persons who write, others have breakfast, because also the sleeping rooms are out of use. Tomorrow we will also lose the sitting room and the painters have not yet arrived. ... Personally I prefer the house in the state when it was still a ruin.”¹⁵⁶ He would tell the same to the “New York Times Book Review”: “Mary has masons, plasterers and painters in the house and I’m staying at sea until it’s over.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Quote by Reynolds, Hemingway. The Final Years, p. 235.

¹⁵³ Ivancich, Torre, p. 110.

¹⁵⁴ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 274.

¹⁵⁵ At that moment Hemingway obviously did not know that Giovanna Tofani would not accompany Adriana.

¹⁵⁶ Ivancich, Torre, pp. 9.

¹⁵⁷ Oct. 8th 1950.

Finally on October 27th 1950 the “Luciano Manara”, a freighter with a few passenger cabins belonging to the Sidarma of Venice, after 40 days at sea landed with the Ivancichs in Havana. Hemingway, with his boat the “Pilar”, met the ship even before they entered the harbor.



Adriana on the way to Cuba (J.F.Kennedy Library)

He took her into his arms like a beloved daughter who had finally come home after a long absence. While the writer helped with the entry formalities and the luggage, Mary drove mother and daughter up to San Paula. From afar they could see the white house on the hill. "It really merited the name "Vigía" (The Outlook). It was built by the Spaniards as a watchtower. Everything was like Papa had described it to me: the long alley of royal palm trees and at the end to the right the Casita, the house for the guests next to the big Ceiba tree and immediately behind, the lower white house, the Casa,"¹⁵⁸ Adriana recalled later.

The Hemingway household at the time included René the servant, Clara the camerera, Juan the driver, and Roberto Herrera the secretary as well as two big dogs, Negrita and Black Dog, and a great number of cats.

Mary: "Ernest longed to show Adriana all his treasured aspects of Cuba, the view from the top of the tower across green valleys with their gray-trunked royal palms looking like exclamation points, the lively, aromatic narrow streets of the old city, not unlike Venice, the Club de Cazadores, the Floridita, the extravagant views from the road that ran westward along the north coast of the big, empty bays there. At home they made much of their partnership in their private, uncapitalized company White Tower Inc., and Adriana moved her drawing paper, pencils and paints to the tower's airy top floor, and there produced creditable drawings of local scenery."¹⁵⁹

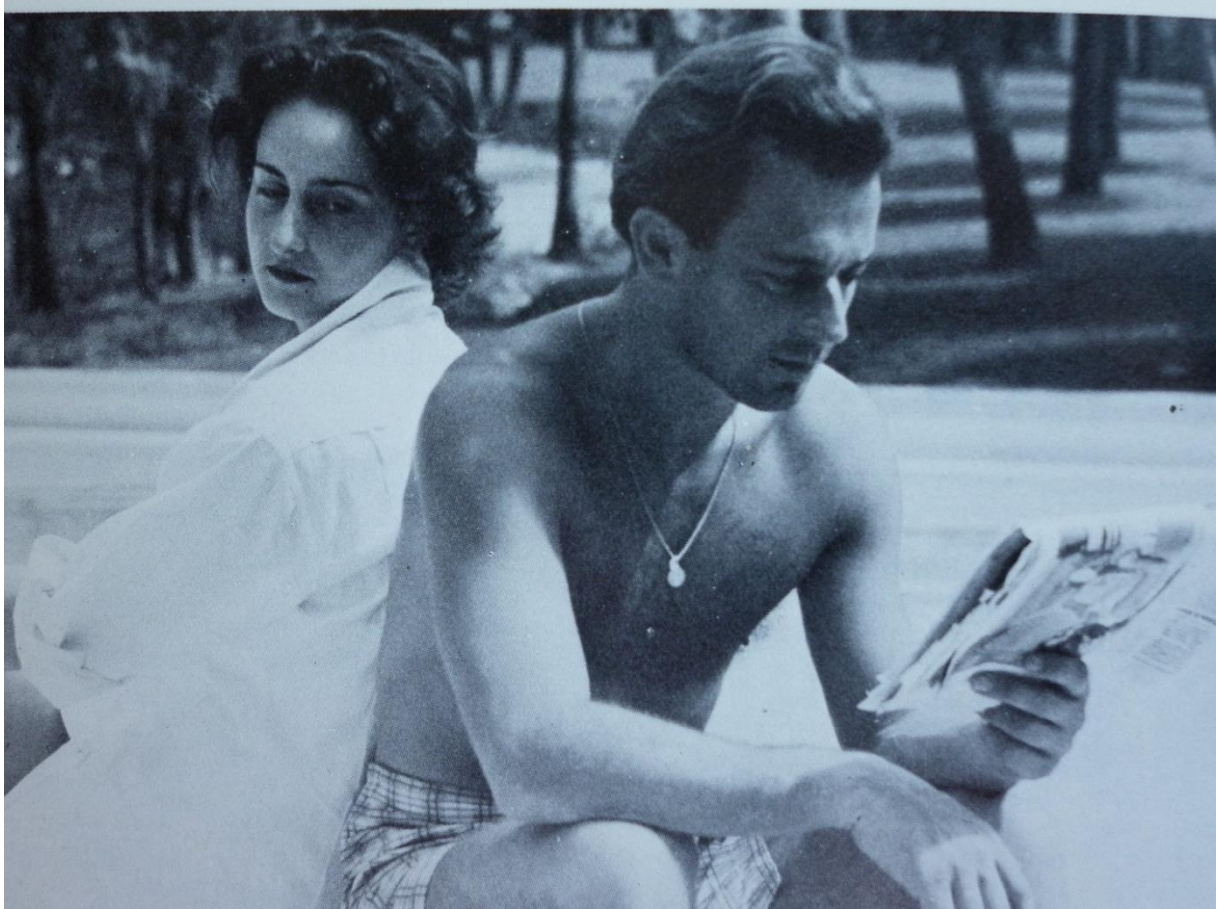
"The household embarked on a course of social festivities, both given and received, such as we never undertook before or since."¹⁶⁰ After a few days Hemingway organized a party for his guests. They should get to know Hemingway's local friends. The house was decorated as a Spanish hacienda. Everywhere there were big fans cut out by Adriana of red and black paper. On the walls posters of the legendary torero Manolete and utensils of corridas. Hemingway had hired some waiters from his favorite bar in Havana "La Floridita" and some guitar players. 35 people had been invited but at the end the house was filled with 80 guests.

¹⁵⁸ Ivancich, Torre, p. 126.

¹⁵⁹ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 278.

¹⁶⁰ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 278.

Hemingway was proud to show himself in the presence of the young girl, that he presented like a hunting trophy to his friends in the “Floridita”. When people took photos of the couple he vainly took off his glasses.¹⁶¹



Adriana and Gianfranco at Hemingway's Pool

While in the Finca, Hemingway and Adriana both worked on their writings in the White Tower. The Tower had been built in 1947 next to the Finca at Mary's initiative to give Ernest a quiet secluded place to write, like the additional building where he worked in Key West that you could reach only by a kind of a draw bridge. First Hemingway had preferred to write in a corner room of the villa, but now he wanted to be near the Venetian Muse. She took the White Tower as a symbol of their companionship and chose it later as the title of her memoir ("La Torre Bianca"). Mostly Hemingway wrote for several hours in the early morning before the guests woke up. Then he organized their day.

¹⁶¹ Reynolds, Hemingway. The Final Years, p. 234.



The White Tower on the Finca

Hemingway called that relationship in the White Tower the “Anonymous Society”, the “Corporation” or short WTI (White Tower Inc.). He saw Adriana as a writing companion. “Here in honesty and self discipline we work independently and yet united”, he commented to her.¹⁶² Ernest encouraged and praised her limited talents. Biographer Lynn spoke of “her wretched poetry and abominable drawings”.¹⁶³ For himself her presence alone stimulated his creativity. He told his son Gregory: “Adriana is so lovely to dream of, and when I wake I’m stronger than the day before and the words pour out of me.”¹⁶⁴

The original edition of “Across the River” had been dedicated to Mary, but Hemingway gave Adriana a special edition with a special dedication: “To Adriana who has inspired everything good in this book and nothing that is

¹⁶² Ivancich, Torre, p. 180.

¹⁶³ Lynn, Hemingway, p. 535.

¹⁶⁴ Gregory Hemingway, Papa, p. 111.

not". Only now Adriana read the full story. She did not like it and told him so. "I told him that I considered it a boring book, the main female character did not seem real to me. He was disappointed because he had longed for my approval." At that moment, Adriana said later, he promised: "For you I will write my best book." Obviously she wanted to suggest that he had already in mind "The Old Man and the Sea", and she would again be the muse.¹⁶⁵

Hemingway made no effort to hide his affections from his wife. When Adriana cut a finger on the sharp fin of a fish, Ernest eagerly sucked the blood, Mary next to them. His behavior put the marriage in deep trouble. Ernest started to drink more than the heavy dose that he normally consumed. The tension between the couple sometimes ended in violence. His personal doctor José Luis Herrera Sotolongo remembered: "On one occasion I had to interfere bodily. I left the house at four in the morning when I saw that the danger was over. They had threatened each other with firearms, and each of them had a shotgun. I had to take their guns away and hid them in my car. ...That night I wrote to tell him, that our friendship was over, but he called me the next day and asked me to help him dry out, as he had decided to stop drinking."¹⁶⁶

Mary complained that Ernest threw a glass of wine into her face in front of the Ivancichs, while mother and daughter reacted as if nothing had happened. "Dora and Adriana Ivancich, like the monkeys on a branch, sat on our sofa, hearing no evil, seeing no evil."¹⁶⁷ Mary's tolerance was stretched to outmost, she lived a kind of martyrdom. Meyers: "The worst phase of his marriage to Mary took place during Adriana's visit."¹⁶⁸ Bernice Kert criticized her submissiveness and her "infinite capacity of adjustment".¹⁶⁹ She continued to do everything to please her husband and save her marriage, losing by the way her self-respect.

¹⁶⁵ Ivancich, Torre, p. 145; Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 10.

¹⁶⁶ Norberto Fuentes: Ernest Hemingway Rediscovered, London 1988, S. 70.

¹⁶⁷ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 280. Adriana said, she heavily criticized Hemingway for his behavior and tried to make peace. (Ivancich, Torre, pp. 164).

¹⁶⁸ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 447.

¹⁶⁹ Kert, Hemingway, p. 471.



Ernest had only eyes for her. Second from left Gianfranco, fourth from left Adriana's mother Dora (J. F. Kennedy Library Boston)

Hemingway was extremely irritated, both by the absurd situation of himself between the two women and by the bad reviews of his book. Meyers underlines "his intense frustration at being unwilling or unable to sleep with or marry Adriana ... he realized that he was too old to marry her."¹⁷⁰

Strangely Adriana and her mother had no bad feeling staying for months at the Finca and ruining Hemingway's marital life. Also later as grown up, she had no criticism of her behavior. She told Bernice Kert in 1980 that Mary owed her a great debt simply because she had not walked away with Ernest. "I could have," she said.¹⁷¹

In spite of his emotional turbulences Hemingway looked healthy and was full of energy, even if he had lost "the movie star handsomeness for good", as son Gregory stated at Christmas. "His eyes which had been sad-kind a lot of the time since the early summer of the forties sparkled again. He had lost

¹⁷⁰ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 447.

¹⁷¹ Kert, Hemingway, p. 457.

weight, too, a sure sign that he wasn't drinking too much and was taking his work seriously."¹⁷²



At the Circulo de Cazadores in Habana Adriana had to get a gun

(Photo by Roberto Herrera Sotolongo)

During her stay, Adriana developed a rare confidentiality with Hemingway. She was able to criticize him, and he accepted it. He promised: "I'll seek to better me, and I thank you. Because I don't have one defect, that you would not have reproached to me."¹⁷³ Son Gregory judged Adriana beautiful but boring. He preferred Afdera Franchetti, whom he had known in Venice in summer. He wrote in his memoir: "Adriana was an attractive girl with dark hair and eyes, high cheekbones, a thin but not too angular face, and a lovely

¹⁷² Gregory Hemingway, *Papa*, p. 108.

¹⁷³ Simonelli, *Hemingway*, p. 9.

smile that betrayed no conceit or overawareness of her lineage. ... In short she merited Papa's basic accolade: she had class."¹⁷⁴ Hemingway defended her in front of his son. "She doesn't talk much, but she is an intellectual counter-puncher, understands what you are saying and then throws it back at you in a gentle mocking way."¹⁷⁵

Son Patrick was more critical. He thought the situation grotesque. He defended Mary and was afraid, his father would lose his head and run away with a woman 30 years younger than him, having to arrange his life all over again.¹⁷⁶

There are several photos by Hemingway's secretary Roberto Herrera Sotolongo showing Ernest and Adriana in Cuba. One on the flying bridge of his ship "Pilar". He looks angry, she looks indifferent in the direction (as if they did not want to be shown together).



For Christmas 1950 Hemingway gave her a Mexican gold weight as gift, she had made a little booklet of the poems she had composed in Cuba. One of the poems criticized his behavior against his wife: "Remember that the

¹⁷⁴ Gregory Hemingway, Papa, p. 109.

¹⁷⁵ Gregory Hemingway, Papa, p. 112.

¹⁷⁶ Kert, Hemingway, p. 459.

heart of a woman/is like the big red flower/that bleeds and dies/when you hurt it.”¹⁷⁷

Adriana liked the happy atmosphere in the streets of Havana. Everywhere you heard music and the people moved to the rhythms of the melodies. And apart from Ernest’s infatuation there was another young admirer for Adriana in Havana, more appropriate to her age: Juan Veranes, a young man of good family who took her dancing and to festivities on New Year’s Eve 1950/51.¹⁷⁸ She confessed that it was her first real love. Ernest was displeased, made reproaches and refused to come himself to the New Year Party.¹⁷⁹

It seems that the departure of mother and daughter finally was speeded up by the rumors about the nature of relationship between the writer and the girl in the hometown of Venice. In January, Dora saw a story run by a French newspaper about her daughter and Hemingway.¹⁸⁰ She decided to return to Venice immediately to contain the scandal. It seems that Hemingway advanced 1000 Dollars to Dora to pay for the trip back.¹⁸¹ Mary reproached her husband: why didn’t he gave the Renata of his book red hairs and blue eyes and let her come from Trieste and not from Venice.

Before this remarkable episode in Cuba found its end, Hemingway organized a big party with 200 invited guests in his house to say goodbye to the Ivancichs.

Juan together with Mary accompanied the Ivancichs , when they left the island on February 7th after more than three months, outstaying their welcome at the Finca Vigía, via Key West up to New Orleans. From there Dora and Adriana travelled alone to New York. Hemingway had sent flowers to their hotel room and told Hotchner to take the two women to lunch at the Storks Club. Then on February 23rd they left on the ship

¹⁷⁷ Ivanich, Torre, p. 169.

¹⁷⁸ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 449.

¹⁷⁹ Ivancich, Torre, p. 171.

¹⁸⁰ Kert, Hemingway, p. 460.

¹⁸¹ There is a receipt dated June 6th, 1951 to prove Dora had paid back that amount to Hemingway. (courtesy of Jonathan Mennell).

“Liberté” for Europa.¹⁸² It was thought Juan would marry his Venetian Fidanzata. But he never turned up in Venice.¹⁸³

Adriana’s departure left Hemingway depressed. “Couldn’t work the first day and had black ass the second”, he wrote to Mary. “I can cheer up everybody except me. You better come home and do that.”¹⁸⁴



Hemingway and the devoted “Daughter” (J. F. Kennedy Library)

Another shows both smiling at the Cerro Hunting Club in Havana, both with shotguns, she in a nice summer dress, her hair hold together with a black ribbon, Hemingway dressed a little neglected in a crumbled shirt. That contrasts with another occasion, where Hemingway is formally dressed in an evening suit with a bow-tie, a white shirt with cuff links . She sits on the ground next to his armchair listening to him adoringly. In the fourth picture, both are in a good mood next to the trophy of a lion Hemingway shot in Africa. She looks more mature than her twenty one years.

¹⁸² Ivanich, Torre, p. 209.

¹⁸³ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 450.

¹⁸⁴ Mary Welsh Hemingway, p. 285.

The Cuban episode presented a psycho-drama with five characters in the style of playwright Tennessee Williams: The main actor reduced to a tragic, ridiculous figure; the young girl, fascinated by the world famous writer, letting herself being exploited as the object of desire, not fully understanding the consequences; the mother irresponsibly supporting her daughter in her role; the wife, accepting the impossible situation, and losing part of her self-respect; the brother profiting as a substitute of love. And there is the general public that can follow what happens on the scene and backstage.

Correspondence of Love 1950-1954

The separation after her visit to Cuba left both in trouble. He was depressed. She was in a state of confusion. "I was only happy when I wrote unhappy poems", she wrote.¹⁸⁵ She starts to visit a Mago to resolve her emotional problems, and she continues to regret the damned book he had written. The book had separated them.

The time Ernest and Adriana were physically near each other lasted all together for nearly a year. That does not mean they saw each other every day. There were periods where Hemingway stayed in Cortina and Adriana in Venice. But the distance was short and exchanges were easily possible. But for most of their five year relationship it was an epistolary friendship. "He was a forceful lover on paper," concluded Reynolds.¹⁸⁶

A collection of 69 letters Hemingway addressed to the Venetian Muse have survived and are conserved today in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center of the Library of the University of Texas in Austin. 36 letters and some postcards Adriana wrote to the author are kept in the Hemingway Collection of the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. His letters start on April 2nd 1950 and end on September 21st 1955, all together 128 pages. But there must have been more.

For instance there are no Hemingway letters between the end of his first visit to Venice in March 1949 and his return to Venice in January 1950. It seems strange that he would have never addressed her in this intermezzo,

¹⁸⁵ Ivancich, Torre, p. 253.

¹⁸⁶ Reynolds, Hemingway. The Final Years, p. 230.

and that he wrote the first letter sixteen months after their first so important encounter. Adriana wrote in her book, that she burnt parts of the correspondence, but remained vague about the extent.¹⁸⁷

The scandal about the novel and Renata-Adriana in the winter of 1950/51 overshadowed the relationship but did not break it. "There was no emotional estrangement between the two", states Ann Doyle after examining their correspondence.¹⁸⁸ In a letter dated March 18th 1951 he tried to comfort her about the gossip. He secures her that she is not the heroine of "Across the River" and he is not Cantwell. He asked rhetorically if it would not have been better, if they never met.¹⁸⁹

It is a fact, that there are no surviving letters of Adriana addressed to Hemingway in a period 1951/1952. That does not mean, that she interrupted the correspondence. In Hemingway's letters of this time there are several references of letters, poems and books received from her.¹⁹⁰ It even seems that at a certain moment Adriana planned another trip to Cuba, this time accompanied by her brother and a friend. But she had to give up the project, because of an illness of her mother Dora.¹⁹¹

Adriana had learnt English, French and some German and Spanish, but in her correspondence with Hemingway she mostly wrote in Italian, which Hemingway could understand.¹⁹² In the first period he sent handwritten letters and she complained that she could not decipher all the words. So she asked him to type. He wrote in an polyglot mixture of English, Spanish, French and Italian.

Hemingway's letters are full of declarations of his love. In one of the first letters: "I will always love you in my heart, and I cannot help that."¹⁹³ The variation of the love theme is not too original: he loves her more than anybody else could love her, he loves her more than the sea, more than God and the Virgin Mary, until his death and beyond, more than Petrarca loved

¹⁸⁷ Ivancich, Torre, pp. 299.

¹⁸⁸ Ann Doyle, *A Final Meeting*, p. 58.

¹⁸⁹ Kert, *Hemingway*, p. 461.

¹⁹⁰ Ann Doyle, *A Final Meeting with Adriana Ivancich at Nervi*, *Hemingway Review* (1988) Vol. 8, p. 59.

¹⁹¹ Ann Doyle, *A Final Meeting*, Letter Hemingway to Adriana March 18th, 1951.

¹⁹² Letter to Charles Scribner, 9-10 July 1950, *Selected Letters*, pp. 702.

¹⁹³ Letter dated June 26th, 1950.

Laura or Abelard Heloise.¹⁹⁴ She is the center of his life, the compass of his heart.¹⁹⁵ “This is a morning letter to tell you that I love you the same morning and afternoon.” “There is no remedy if not in the Calle del Rimedio.”¹⁹⁶ “When I see you and are together with you I feel I can achieve whatever I want, and I write better than ever. When I am far from you I am good for nothing.”¹⁹⁷ Remarkably there is no diminishing in the intensity of his expression of love in the five year period.

“Many of the letters seem banal and even silly,” judges Ann Doyle. The code words and nicknames they used “seem rather juvenile”. The “White Tower Corporation” resembled “a child’s secret club”.¹⁹⁸ He also called her “Black Horse”. Since the meeting in Paris he used the letter M as abbreviation for Mistake. The code would mean “Kiss”. So for instance he signed the bottom of his letter dated January 20th 1953 with three M.

Some letters he would sign with A. Ivancich, suggesting they were so close in mind, that they could exchange identities.¹⁹⁹ In one letter he fused their names signing “Hemingstein Ivancich”.²⁰⁰ He pronounced the feeling that he and Adriana were kindred spirits, and “he treats her as an equal”.²⁰¹

Sometimes it seems in his letters, that he wanted to pull back and give her up. On June 16th 1950 he advises her to marry. In a letter dated July 6th 1951 he recommends that she should find a nice husband but in the same moment he pitied himself, he would need a major operation to cure his love. And on July 19th 1953 he wrote how he longed for her, but if this would be a trouble for her and she did not want to see him again, he would stay away from Venice.²⁰²

Adriana can’t be reproached for consciously stimulating Hemingway’s feelings. She never responds directly to his protestations of love and

¹⁹⁴ Petrarca: Letter February 2nd 1954.

¹⁹⁵ Letter August 9th 1950.

¹⁹⁶ Ivanich, Torre, p. 316, Calle del Rimedio, her address in Venice.

¹⁹⁷ Ivanich, Torre, p. 252.

¹⁹⁸ Doyle/Houston, Letters, p. 19. See film Dead Poets Society.

¹⁹⁹ Hemingway loved to play with the change of identities. In “Across the River” he let’s Renata say: „Please love me. I wish it was me who could love you.” (p. 136)

²⁰⁰ Letter January 6th 1953.

²⁰¹ Doyle/Houston, Letters, p. 19.

²⁰² Kert, Hemingway, p. 469.

passion.²⁰³ Doyle/Houston summing up rather positively the quality of her letters. They write: “Adriana’s letters do much to explain Hemingway’s fascination with her. They display considerable wit and sensitivity and convey a strong sense of her personal charm. ... Adriana demonstrates impressive maturity in her relationship with the aging writer.”²⁰⁴

Often his letters “combine boyish exuberance expressions of affection with strongly paternal advice”.²⁰⁵ Often he writes about her brother Gianfranco, who helps him to overcome his love pain. He considers him as a partner in loving her. He writes about his work, about the energy she had given him. In her presence he had worked well, without her everything becomes difficult.²⁰⁶ He writes about events in his personal life, like the accident on the “Pilar” with his serious head injuries. He had to avoid risks, he said, to be able to see her again.²⁰⁷ Later in 1952 he starts to bother her with his money problems that became a persecution for him. He would have liked to come to Europe and Venice again, but he did not have enough money. There were problems with his Italian publisher Alberto Mondadori, and he mentioned he wished to appoint her as his literary agent in Italy.²⁰⁸

The Old Man and the Sea

The idea of a story about an old Cuban fisherman and his fight with a big marlin dated already from 1935. Adriana claimed that she had also been the inspiration for “The Old Man and the Sea”, Hemingway’s biggest success crowned by the Pulitzer and the Nobel Prize. He started to write at the beginning of 1951, when Adriana was still around in Cuba. He told her: “I have started to write another piece about the sea. It is the fighting part that I did not want to write, because the wound had been cicatrized. But I have cut it open and tried to handle it. ... The first day I wrote 1050 words, the second 1578 and yesterday 1145.”

²⁰³ Doyle/Houston, Letters, p. 20.

²⁰⁴ Doyle/Houston, Letters, p. 19.

²⁰⁵ Doyle/Houston, Letters, p. 20.

²⁰⁶ Letter July 6th, 1951.

²⁰⁷ Letter, July 3rd, 1950.

²⁰⁸ Letter, July 16th, 1952.

While continuing to work on the small novel he wrote to her in Venice: "I thank you to come all mornings to help me." He felt near to her and thought of her, him in Cuba, her in Venice.²⁰⁹

Also Gianfranco was updated about the progress of the little novel. In February 1951 the writer showed his Italian friend the last words of "The Old Man and the Sea", that he had put on paper while on his boat the *Pilar*.²¹⁰

The book was published with a jacket design by Adriana. Hemingway had rejected the proposals Scribner's made for the cover. They were "awful" he wrote to Adriana and asked her to make an own offer, as she knew the story well. But she had to do it very fast as the time of publication pressed. She designed a group of poor huts of the fishing village Cojima in Cuba, in the background the sea. When the drawings arrived he wrote on May 31st 1952 : "I have never been prouder of you and it seems as though I have been proud of you ever since I can remember. Enclosed is the letter I had from Wallace Meyer this morning. The coperto they took is the one of the hill with the fine apartments and of the shacks where you made the sketches of old Anselmo and the bay and the blue golf behind. It is really splendid. Just what I would have wanted if I had the brains enough to ask for it. Gianfranco and Mary both thought it was wonderful too." He could not stop praising her talent: "If I could only have been there to celebrate with you when you had finished. I think we have what triumphs we have at much too great a distance from each other."

He spoke of her "steady improvement in the quality. The drawing of the fisherman's shacks and the bait-house and the composition is superb and the boats are perfect." He thought that Scribner's could use the rest of the drawings in a window exhibition when the book came out.²¹¹ Then he speaks about her payment for the drawings. If it would not be sufficient he would pay the difference, he promised.

Hemingway had pressed his editor to accept the drawings. According to the promotion director of Scribner's "the jacket drawings for both these books

²⁰⁹ Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 8.

²¹⁰ Gianfranco Ivancich, *Ricordo*, p. 227.

²¹¹ Hemingway, *Selected Letters*, pp. 762.

as executed by 'A' were so bad that we had to have them skillfully redrawn."²¹²

The cover design disturbed again Adriana's family peace. As the young Venetian was mentioned as the artist in the book, mother Dora was upset, fearing a new upcoming of the scandal.²¹³

In September 1952 the magazine "Life" ran the whole story in a single issue and sold 5.3 million copies. Delmore Schwartz asked how was it possible that the small novel was greeted by such an overwhelming praise by critics and public alike. He saw it as "a desire to continue to admire a great writer". It was a general relief that the famous Hemingway after the failure of "Across the River" could still write. Hemingway wrote to her: "The success of the book has been exciting and also not at all exciting. When something is done and you can't do anything more about it, it is better not to think of it any more. Do you think it is pleasant to receive 3800 letters all about the same subject? I am really fed up to hear the talk about the book and I would like to be with you and talk of something else."²¹⁴

Hemingway could not stop in his praise for the designs. Still in January 1953 he wrote her drawings captured the spirit of the book better than his writing.²¹⁵ He repeats to her, that she had inspired the novel and had merited parts of the royalties.²¹⁶ But is not clear whether he in fact sent her money from the European funds of the "Old Man".

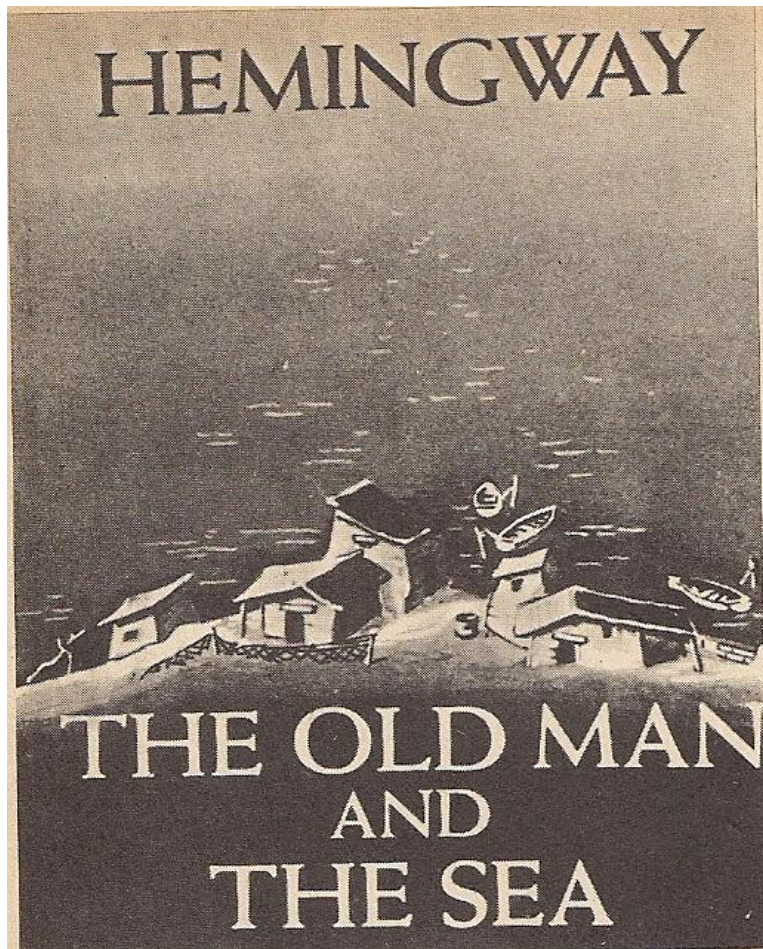
²¹² Lynn, Hemingway, p. 535. Her drawings later also appeared on the covers of other Hemingway novels for instance in Germany like "To Have and Have Not" and "A Farewell to Arms".

²¹³ Doyle/Huston, Letters, p. 28.

²¹⁴ Ivancich, Torre, p. 295.

²¹⁵ Letter January 6th 1953.

²¹⁶ Letter March 18th, 1952.



Adriana's Cover Design

Last time in Venice

In the beginning of 1953 Hemingway saw another chance to fall in love with a young girl who dropped in by chance at his Cuban home: the German photographer Inge Schönthal. She was 23 years old at the time, more or less the same age as Adriana. She wanted to take a series of photos of the famous writer, and he invited her to his house. She stayed for two weeks, was always around Ernest, at the pool, in the house, on his boat. At the end he invited her to follow him on his forthcoming trip to Africa, probably without consulting Mary. Inge would have liked to, but she had other engagements. The young German shot some of the most famous photos of Hemingway, among others herself in bathing suit together with the writer

and a big fish.²¹⁷ Inge would later marry the Italian publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.

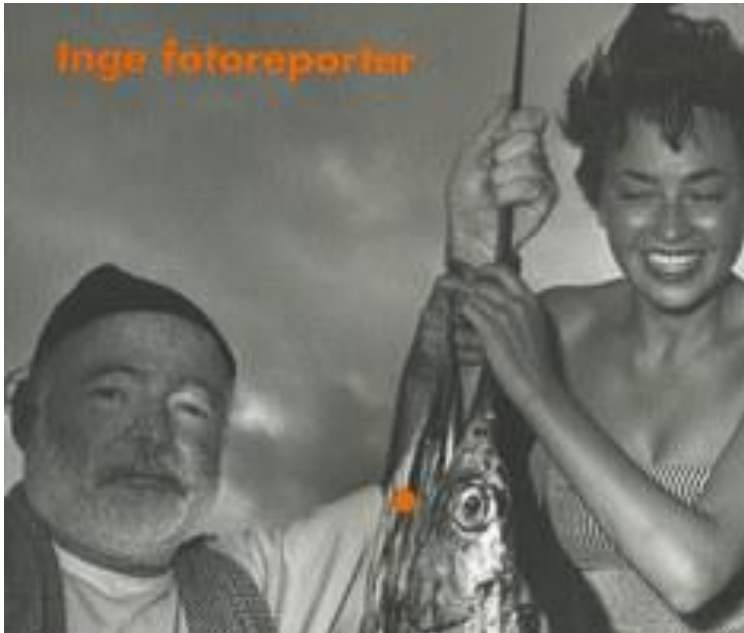


Photo taken by Inge Schönthel with automatic trigger

*

In June 1953 Hemingway phoned Gianfranco, who was in Venice at the time. He would come to Europe again. Gianfranco drove his car all along to Le Havre to meet Ernest and Mary. Then they travelled together to Paris, Chartres and finally to the Fiesta in Pamplona where they arrived on July 7th. Two days later he wrote to Adriana the longing for her had increased since there was no more Ocean between them.

In August 1953 Hemingway and Mary returned to East Africa, where they stayed for nearly half a year. On January 22nd 1954 Hemingway made a crash landing with a Cessna plane near the Nile River in Uganda. The pilot had overlooked a telegraph line. One of the plane's wings was cut off. The writer suffered only minor injuries. But the next day a De Havilland Rapide plane crashed during take off on the grass runway and burst into flames. This time Hemingway was badly hurt: a fractured skull, cracking of two

²¹⁷ See Jobst C. Knigge: Hemingway und die Deutschen, Hamburg 2009, pp. 88. Also Jobst C. Knigge: Feltrinelli. Sein Weg in den Terrorismus, Berlin 2010.

discs of the spine, arm and shoulder dislocated, liver, kidney and spleen ruptured, arm and head burnt, vision and hearing impaired.

Knowing that he had escaped death by chance, he wrote Adriana from his sick bed: "I never loved you more than in the hour of my death. ... It was a really terrible fight, Daughter, and now since six days I fight to stay alive and to see you again."²¹⁸ He wanted to see Adriana again at all costs. In the meantime news of his "death" had reached Venice. On January 25th the maid rushed into Adriana's room and cried: "Hemingway è morto!" Adriana started to cry. She said later: My heart was heavy like a stone."²¹⁹

He even wrote to over eighty years old Bernard Berenson in Florence about his desire. On January 24th: "My news always comes from Venice. It is two years now that I have not been there and that is twenty years too long."²²⁰ And on February 2nd : "I want to write Adriana in Venice and I write quite a good and truly loving letter and I read it over to see if it is OK and it is wonderfully OK except that half is in Spanish and ½ in Kamba. That is when you know things are perhaps not too good. ... Death is just shit as we both know. But I want to see my lovely Adriana and I want to make the small pilgrimage to see you."²²¹

On March 23th 1954 the Hemingways, travelling on the ship "SS Africa", were back in Venice. It would be his third and last time in the fairy tale town in the lagoon. All together he spent ten months in Venice and Cortina.

With their dozens of suitcases and trunks, shotguns, and Massai spears they moved into the "Gritti". Ernest had several medical examinations and stayed most of the time with pain in bed. He tried to see Adriana as often as possible. But the young woman, now 24 years old and still unmarried, was shocked when she met the writer. Breaking out in tears he offered a rare sight. "Watch me, now you can say you saw Hemingway crying," he said. "It was not easy. I put on a real fight to stay alive to see you."²²²

²¹⁸ Ivancich, Torre, p. 314.

²¹⁹ Kert, Hemingway, p. 477.

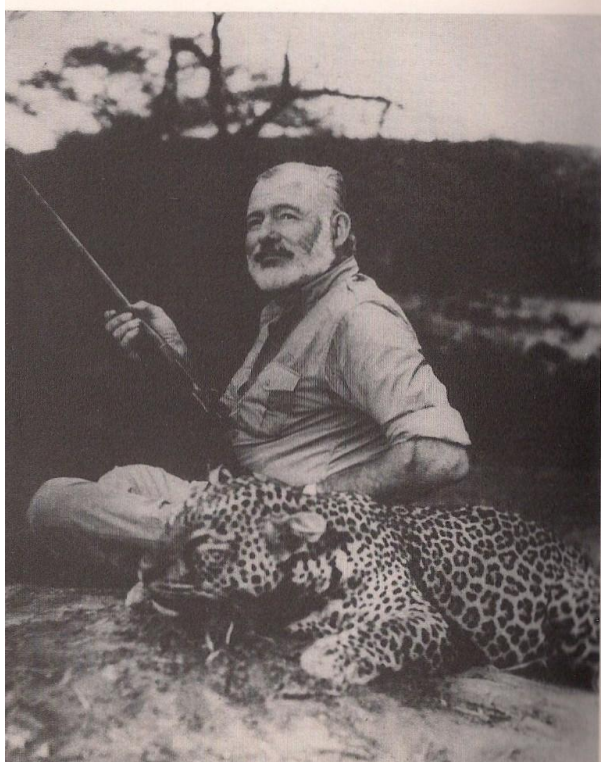
²²⁰ Selected Letters, p. 801.

²²¹ Letter dated Feb. 2nd 1954, Selected Letters, pp. 827.b

²²² Ivancich, Torre, p. 324.



Last time in Venice 1954 (John F. Kennedy Library Boston)



Souvenirs From Kenya



to Adriana's Library

Fernanda Pivano remembered: "His face was emaciated, his hands nearly transparent and without energy, the body broken by his inner injuries and fractured bones. But he did not yet renounce on the fight for life. He did not want pictures taken of him. "You should not photograph a beaten man,"²²³ he said.

Hotchner was also shocked when he saw the author. "What was shocking for me now was how he had aged in the intervening five months. ... He appeared to have diminished somewhat – I don't mean physically diminished – but some of the aura of massiveness seemed to have gone out of him."²²⁴

Hotchner met Adriana only then for the first time: "Adriana Ivancich was a tall nineteen year old [she must have been 24 now] aristocratic beauty with long black hair and a curiously shaped but not unattractive nose that Ernest said was true Byzantine."²²⁵

Among other old friends, Hemingway was meeting Cipriano again. The owner of "Harry's" was just coming back from Torcello. He tried to entice him: "The ducks are beyond description. Ernest, you must stay a few days longer and shoot." Hemingway answered plaintively: "I couldn't raise a gun, much less hit anything."²²⁶

Instead of Torcello, Hemingway made a trip to the Kechler estates near Udine. In San Martino di Codroipo the Kechlers owned a villa of the Cinquecento, a former residence of the doge-family Manin. In the other villa in Percoto the Hemingways stayed from April 9th to the 15th. Adriana was joining the party. From Percoto they took a trip to the Lignano peninsula at the mouth of the Tagliamento. Carlo Kechler was the founder of the Società Lignano Pineta Spa. that had started to develop the place with its large sandy beaches as a seaside resort. Hemingway commented: "This one day will be Italy's Florida."²²⁷

²²³ Fernanda Pivano, in: Hemingway a Venezia, p. 169.

²²⁴ Hotchner, Papa, p. 81.

²²⁵ Hotchner, Papa, p. 88.

²²⁶ Hotchner, Papa, p. 92.

²²⁷ The town of Lignano Sabbiadoro in honour of the writer created a Parco Hemingway with his bronze statue. In the parc in 2010 they organized an exhibition "Amore e gratitudine. Il Friuli di Hemingway".



Villa Kechler Manin in San Martino di Codroipo



Villa Kechler in Percoto



Hemingway and Adriana on the Kechler estate (Archivio Biblioteca Comunale di Lignano Sabbiadoro)



Hemingway and Adriana. Photo taken by Mary Hemingway (Archivio Biblioteca Comunale di Lignano Sabbiadoro)



Adriana sul Canale Grande (Kennedy Library Boston)

Hotchner described Federico Kechler (1901-1970): “He was a polite, amusing, chic, nimble Venetian who on this occasion was wearing suede shoes, matching suede gloves, an almost matching suede jacket. ... He spoke perfect Cambridge English and was considered one of Venice’s top marksmen and all-round sportsmen.”²²⁸ “Kech” – as Hemingway used to call him - said to the writer: “You know, when you were announced dead, your friends here took it very hard. Adriana begged me to take her to Cuba so that she could burn down your finca, so no one would ever sleep in your bed, sit on your chair or ever go up in the white tower. ...Poor damned blessed girl.”²²⁹

²²⁸ Hotchner, *Papa*, p. 86.

²²⁹ Hotchner, *Papa*, p. 88.

On May 5th Hemingway and Hotch were invited to the Palazzo Ivancich. Hemingway thought to prepare a real American Hamburger meal himself.²³⁰ They bought the meat at a butcher in the Calle Barozzi . Then they reinforced themselves with a couple of Bloody Marys in “Harry’s Bar”, where they also bought a tin of Beluga caviar. “To establish the right balance”, Hemingway said.

After the meal Adriana accompanied the two to the Hotel “Gritti”, where other friends waited for a goodbye party, heavy with more alcohol. The next morning they would leave. Hemingway was sad: „How can anyone live in New York, when there’s Venice and Paris?“²³¹ he said to Hotchner.

In a chauffeur-driven Lancia they went through the south of France to Spain. From Nice he wrote on May 9th 1954: “Leaving was like an amputation...The first day travel hurt the back enough to make nausea. Did not know you could hurt so completely. Yesterday hardly hurt at all. Today will be fine. We go to see Cezanne and Van Gogh country: Aix en Provence, St. Remy, Les Baux, then Avignon and Nimes maybe on to Montpellier and beyond. Daughter I love you and miss you so much. You know we were pretty good maybe and with things bad we never fought. Darling Hotch is very good. I am not as good a companion as I should be because I have death lonesomeness for you. Please give my love to Miss Dora and to Jackie and Francesca. I was very happy to be with a family. Hope not too much nuisance to the family.”²³²

Ernest’s and Adriana’s final meeting took place in Nervi at the outskirts of Genoa, where Hemingway stayed at the hotel Savoia Beeler, waiting for the departure of his ship for Cuba.²³³ He had informed Adriana²³⁴ about his itinerary from Spain to Italy and given her the address of his hotel in Nervi. Adriana really arrived. The ship “Francesco Morosini” left Genoa the next day, on June 6th 1954. In a letter dated June 15th Hemingway wrote from the ship and thanked her for the wonderful surprise she gave him, seeing him off.

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²³⁰ Hotchner, Papa, pp. 88.

²³¹ Hotchner, Papa, p. 94

²³² Hemingway, Selected Letters, pp. 830.

²³³ Ann Doyle, A Final Meeting, p. 60.

²³⁴ Letter dated April 19th 1954.

For another year and a half they exchanged letters. The tone of his letters becomes more and more plaintive. He complains of his health, of money and tax problems, about trouble with other people. Doyle/Huston conclude about the last period: "The letters trace a gradual but steady deterioration of body, heart, and spirit as Hemingway struggles to withstand natural and personal disasters, financial worries, and the pressure of dealing with his own fame."²³⁵

In 1955 the letter exchange becomes erratic. She does not respond to several of his letters. Her last is dated April 6th. He is worried whether his post got through to Venice. Then he implores her to write.

He sent his last letter in September 1955. She later explained that there was too much gossip, that wanted their simple friendship to appear as something else.²³⁶ She had fallen in love with an Italian who was jealous and could not stand her intimacy with the American writer. He asked her to burn much of her papers that reminded of Hemingway.²³⁷ The writer answered: "When your happiness is on stake, I am always willing to withdraw."²³⁸ But renouncing her was very difficult for him.

Hemingway continued to write to Gianfranco up to the end in Ketchum/Idaho. Quotation from a letter dated May 25th 1956: "We miss you very much and it is lonesome to have somebody around as you were and have them like a brother and have them go away. Now I have no brother and no good drinking friend. ...Gianfranco, it is hard to write a letter about your going away without being sentimental and it is very hard to write a letter to Venice without mentioning Adriana, but I am doing it just the same. ... Please keep in touch and please let me know how everything goes with Adriana, to whom I wish all the luck. Must not say more."²³⁹

On Christmas 1958 Gianfranco had written that he sold his finca in Cuba. Hemingway responded on January 7th 1959 from Ketchum, Idaho: "It was a lovely piece of ground, and I remember how happy you were there." And naturally he thinks of Adriana, with whom he had no more direct contact. "Gianfranco I worry about A[driana] and wish you could give me any news

²³⁵ Doyle/Houston, Letters, p. 37.

²³⁶ Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 7.

²³⁷ Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 7.

²³⁸ Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 7.

²³⁹ Hemingway, Selected Letters, pp. 858.

of her: good or bad.”²⁴⁰ The last letter to Gianfranco came from Cuba on May 30th 1960, he does not mention Adriana any more.²⁴¹ One year later the Italian friend was present at Hemingway’s funeral.

In 1956 Hemingway had travelled for the last time to Europe. He wanted to go to Africa again with his son Patrick. But 1956 was the year of the Suez war and the Suez canal was closed. All the ships to East Africa were blocked. Hemingway remained in Paris.

Three years before his death Hemingway sought to protect the remaining intimacy of his relationship with Adriana. He signed an order for his agent Hotchner, that there should never be a film version of “Across the River”. Director John Huston at a certain moment had planned to film the story, that would have fitted with his other film plots: people that fought against their destiny, even when everything seemed in vain. Anthony Quinn would have liked to play the Hemingway part. In 1972 he travelled to Venice and visited the places of the story, including Latisana.²⁴²

Hemingway’s last love was again a very young woman. Valerie Danby-Smith was 19 years old when she met the writer in Madrid in the year 1959. He invited her to be his “secretary”. She accompanied him in his travels in Spain and France. In Paris he showed her “his” town like he had done before with Adriana and “Jigee” Viertel. Then he asked her, to come to Cuba. “He told me he could work well only when I was around. ... Sometimes he fantasized that we would have a life together. His days with Miss Mary were over, he said.”²⁴³ He spoke of marriage and to have a daughter, that he had always desired.²⁴⁴

End of January 1960 Valerie arrived in Cuba and lived in the Casita, where Adriana had stayed before her. She helped him with the manuscript of his memories of his years in Paris and took part in the activities of the Hemingway household. The writer continued to declare his love to her, but it seems that also this relationship remained platonic. Before she left in July

²⁴⁰ Hemingway, *Selected Letters*, pp. 890.

²⁴¹ Hemingway, *Selected Letters*, pp. 903.

²⁴² In the exhibition “Amore e gratitudine. Il Friuli di Hemingway” organized by the town von Lignano Sabbiadoro in 2010 was shown a photo of the actor at Latisana.

²⁴³ Valerie Hemingway, *Running with the Bulls*, New York 2004, p. 84.

²⁴⁴ He said to Adriana Ivancich: „I always longed for having a girl and I had three sons, and now I have found you, my daughter.“ (Torre Bianca, p. 72).

1960 he said, that her nearness to him saved him from suicide. But one day he had to do it.²⁴⁵ Some years later Valerie married Hemingway's son Gregory.



Valerie Hemingway talking to the author Lausanne 2010

²⁴⁵ Valerie Hemingway, *Running*, p. 129.

Adriana's further life

In 1953 Adriana Ivancich published her own collections of poems with Mondadori in Milan, who was also Hemingway's publisher. She had asked Hemingway to suggest a title, and he had proposed "Il Fiume, La Laguna, L'Isola Lontana", the three stages of their encounter: The Tagliamento River, Venice, Cuba. But Adriana chose as title: "Ho guardato il cielo e la terra" (I looked at the sky and the earth).

She explained: "'Il Fiume, la Laguna, L'Isola Lontana' was a nice title, I thought. But it was more suited for a novel than for poetry. It would have been the right title for our story, partner, for that story, that I will never write, because nobody would believe me: somebody would think this, somebody that, and only we will know and we will be dead." She sent a copy to Cuba and Hemingway wrote: "Your book is absolutely nice, my heart tells me, and I had taken my photograph while I was reading it. I hope that the reviews will be good, but don't be afraid, because the book is good."²⁴⁶ He sees the poems as a product of their common workshop, the White Tower Inc. (WTI). He writes her that he is full of pride: "Viva Adriana, Viva El Torre!"

The poems were mostly inspired by her relationship with Hemingway or with her stay on Cuba, like the one with the title "We":

You tall, I small/hand in hand on paths/only ours. No fear of rain/or of stones/or of mud./So many projects, so many targets/always vital and new/and often to understand/not necessary words./When the whirlwind broke loose/you stopped for the good of mine/that I could continue alone.

The poems are full of nostalgia of the past like "The Seagull":

Along these streets and bridges/we have walked together/we have looked at the lagoon/and the black gondolas./Now it is impossible for you to return/to this place so much loved./And even if you have it hidden from me/I know well your sadness./While the wind caresses me/a seagull passes by./'Fly!', I tell him/'Fly to the far away island, talk to him for me.'²⁴⁷

The relationship with Hemingway had a disturbing effect on her further emotional life and her possibility to establish a stable relationship with a

²⁴⁶ Ivancich, Torre, p. 292; Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 11.

²⁴⁷ Printed in Simonelli, Hemingway, pp.13, translation by Jobst Knigge.

male partner. A first marriage with Dimitri Monas, a man of Greek origin in Venice, failed.

Then in July 1961 the dominant father figure went “across the river”. Worn out, sick and depressed, he shot himself far away in Ketchum/Idaho. “When I received the news of his death I felt an enormous pain, because I was far away, because I could not stay near to him in his last years,”²⁴⁸ she said in 1981.

In 1963 she married the German nobleman Count Rudolf von Rex and had two sons. The family lived in the little town Orbetello and on a farm near Capalbio 100 miles north of Rome. But the memory of Hemingway hold her in its grip.

Five years after Hemingway’s death she sold all the surviving letters, many very intimate, that her American friend had written to her at “Christie’s”. Perhaps she wanted to get rid of the memories that tormented her. Perhaps she only needed money. But she was disappointed. The sale to the New York book dealer El Dieff amounted to only 17 000 Dollars. She would have known that Hemingway had established in his will of 1958 “that none of the letters written in my lifetime will ever be published”.

In 1965 the novel “Across the River and into the Trees” was finally also published in Italy. At that point Adriana herself came out with the truth. She confessed to the Italian magazine “Epoca”²⁴⁹: “Io sono la Renata di Hemingway”. Adriana was less discreet than Hemingway’s first love, the nurse Agnes von Kurowski, who refused to be identified as the model for Catherine Barkley in “A Farewell to Arms”.

But Adriana was not the only one who claimed to be the model for Renata: There was Afdera Franchetti, sister of Nanyuki, who was married to the American actor Henry Fonda.²⁵⁰ She also was a noble woman, daughter of Baron Raimondo Franchetti, born in 1931 she was nearly of the same age as Adriana and she belonged to the Hemingway circle in Venice. But the eccentric Afdera was known for her mythomania. She also had seen herself as the model for Holly Golightly in Truman Capote’s novel “Breakfast at Tiffany’s”.

²⁴⁸ Simonelli, Hemingway, p. 7.

²⁴⁹ July 1965.

²⁵⁰ From 1957-61. She wrote an autobiography with the title „Never before Noon“.

Adriana could not free herself of the Hemingway myth. In 1980 she published the story of her relationship with Hemingway under the title "La Torre Bianca". The square white tower, also called Ivory Tower, figured as the symbol of their relationship. It had three floors. The lower floor housed Hemingway's cats. The second floor was the author's study and the third floor was reserved for Adriana during her stay. There she wrote her poems and made her drawings. After Adriana left Cuba, the tower became something of a shrine for Hemingway. For some time he did not dare to enter it, then he considered it like sacred.

Many of the dialogues in the book were taken directly from the Hemingway letters. As the letters for copyright reasons could not be published in the USA, there could not be an American version of the "Torre Bianca".²⁵¹

The book did not have the success she had hoped for. For many it seemed too narcissistic. She gave herself too much importance in Hemingway's life. The title could have been: "Me and Hemingway".

Jeffrey Meyers commented on her book: "The tone of the book is bitterness mingled with pride: pride in her family background and her artistic achievements, in Hemingway's love and her inspiration of his art, bitterness about the effect of this friendship on her life. ... The letters and conversations reported in the book suggest a friendship both paternal and flirtatious. But Hemingway maintains his role of passive suitor and their relationship does not develop. ... The book never takes into account the feelings of other people, but treats every event from her narcissistic point of view. ... Despite her assertions of affection, her portrait of Hemingway is negative. In Venice he is tired, jaded, a hard-drinking sentimentalist; in Havana rude, dominating, obsessive; in their final meeting shattered and tearful. Adriana's attitude to Hemingway remains ambivalent, she affirms her loyalty to him but describes herself as a victim of his love, burdened by the sheer numbers of his letters. She is tempted to burn them and get rid of 'that Hemingway who had covered me with mud'."²⁵²

Adriana's last years were dominated by depression. Giuseppe Tropeano, a Roman psychiatrist, met her in 1981 in Venice. She told him about her

²⁵¹ Ann Doyle, *A Final Meeting*, p. 61.

²⁵² Jeffrey Meyers: *Memoirs of Hemingway: The Growth of the Legend*. in: *The Virginian Quarterly Review*, Autumn 1984 pp. 587-612

mental problems. Among others, she said, she suffered from the loss of “mio uomo” (my man), meaning Hemingway. Tropeano diagnosed manic depression, the same disorder Hemingway had been treated for.²⁵³

After two failed suicide attempts she killed herself on March 24th, 1983. Her husband found her in the afternoon hanged on a tree in the garden of their farm near Capalbio.²⁵⁴ She did not die immediately. She was cut down and taken to a nearby hospital where she passed away a few hours later. Her tomb can be found on the cemetery in Porto Ercole in the Argentario Peninsula.

In her death she followed the end of Ernest who shot himself in 1961. One year before Hemingway's brother Leicester had killed himself. The long series of suicides of the Hemingways had started with that of his father (1928), that of his sister Ursula (1966), followed by his niece Margaux (1996). His son Gregory died under strange, suspicious circumstances in jail in Miami in 2001.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Tropeano to the author. He said, perhaps Hemingway and her could have been helped if lithium had already been discovered as a medicine.

²⁵⁴ Meyers, Hemingway, p. 452. Fernanda Pivano in: “Corriere della Sera” March 26th 1983.

²⁵⁵ Jigee Viertel, for whom Hemingway had a fling, became an alcoholic and burnt to death in an accident.

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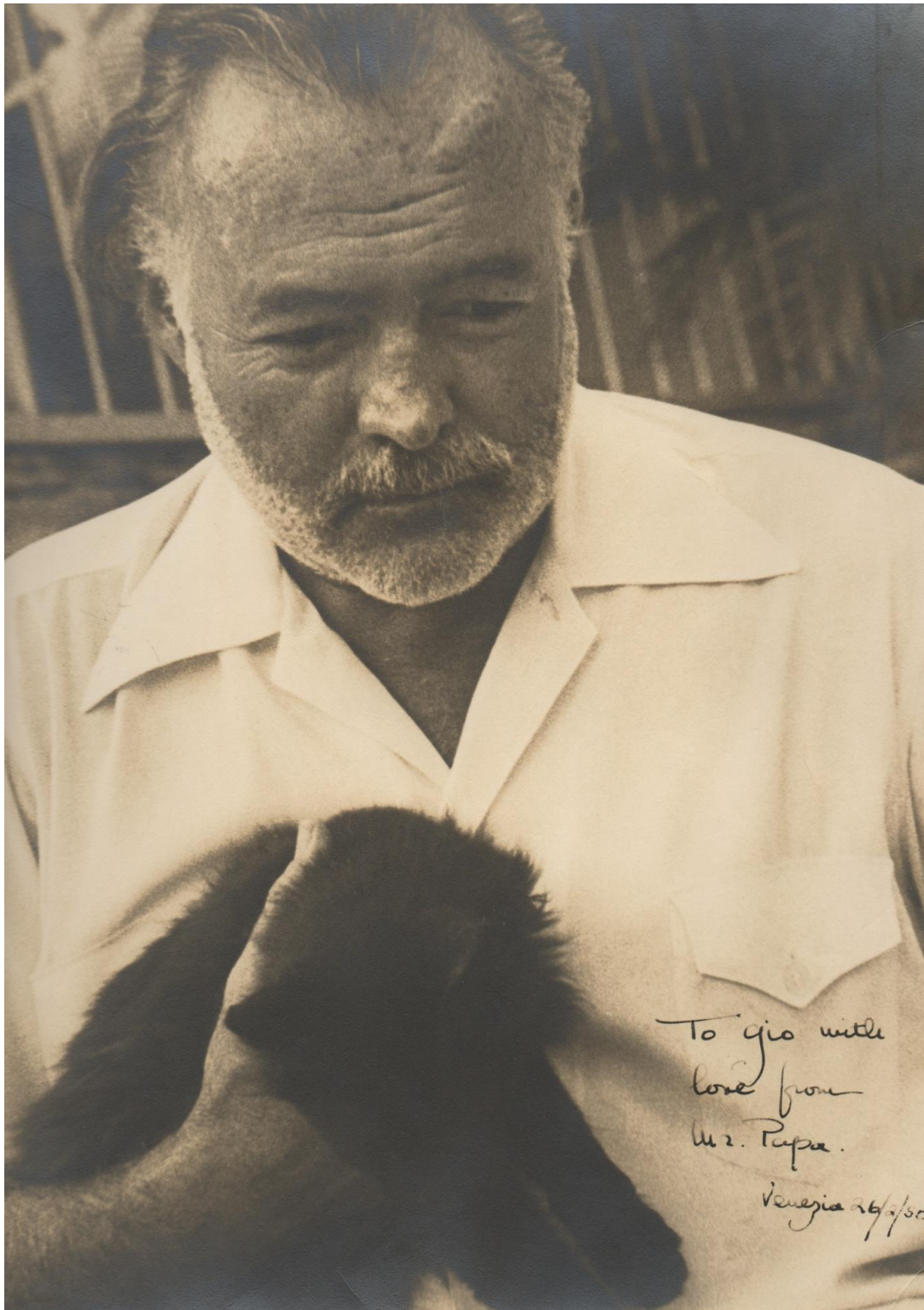


Photo dedicated to Giovanna Tofani, friend of Adriana.

(courtesy of Jonathan Mennell)

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